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## HUCKLEBERRY FINN

*Would you like to appear before your friends as a ghost?*

*Would you like to take a trip down the Mississippi on a raft?*

*Would you like to meet a duke — a king — a band of robbers?*

*These thrilling adventures — and others, too — happened to Huckleberry Finn. As you read Huck's story, decide which of the adventures you would want to happen to you.*







# HUCKLEBERRY FINN

*by*

*Mark Twain*

*Adapted by* VERNE B. BROWN

*Illustrated by* SEYMOUR FLEISHMAN

SCOTT, FORESMAN AND COMPANY

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## CHAPTER I

# *I Discover Moses*

**Y**ou don't know about me unless you have read *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. That book was made by Mr. Mark Twain. There was things which he stretched, but mainly he told the truth. That is nothing. I never seen anybody that didn't lie one time or another, except Tom's Aunt Polly, or the Widow Douglas, or Mary. They're all told about in that book, which is mostly a true book, with some stretchers as I said before.

The book tells about Tom and me finding the money that the robbers hid in the cave—six thousand dollars apiece—all gold. It was an awful sight of money when it was all piled up. It made us both rich.



Well, Judge Thatcher put it out at interest and it fetched us a dollar a day apiece, more than a body could tell what to do with.

The Widow Douglas took me for her son and allowed she would civilize me. But it was rough living in the house all the time and so I lit out. I got into my old rags and went back to my sugar hogshead<sup>1</sup> again. But Tom Sawyer hunted me up and said he was going to start a band of robbers, and if I would go back to the widow's and be respectable, I could join. So I went back.

The widow cried over me and called me a poor lost lamb. She called me a lot of other names too, but she never meant no harm by it. She put me in them new clothes again and made me feel all stuffy. But the same thing commenced again. She rung a bell for supper and you had to come on time. And you couldn't go right to eating, for she had to tuck down her head and grumble a little over the vittles. Everything was all right without any prayer, only every food was cooked by itself. I like different foods

<sup>1</sup> *hogshead*, a large barrel. Huck used to sleep in a hogshead before he went to live with the Widow Douglas.

cooked together. Things get mixed up and the juice kind of trades around, and it all goes better. After supper the widow got her book and learned me about Moses and the Bulrushers.<sup>2</sup> and I wanted to find out all about him. But when she let it out that Moses had been dead a considerable long time, I didn't care no more about him, because I don't take no stock in dead people. I asked her if I could smoke, but she said it was a mean practice and wasn't clean. That is just the way with some people. They get down on a thing when they don't know nothing about it. Here she was a-bothering about Moses, which was no kin to her, and no use to anybody, being dead, yet finding a power of fault with me for doing a thing that had some good in it. And she took snuff,<sup>3</sup> too. Of course that was all right because she done it herself.

Her sister was Miss Watson, a skinny old maid with big eyeglasses. She took a turn at me with a spelling book for an hour. She would say, "Don't put your feet up there, Huckleberry," and "Set up

<sup>2</sup> *Bulrushers*. Huck is referring to a Bible story which tells how the baby Moses was supposed to have been found among the rushes in a stream.

<sup>3</sup> *snuff*, tobacco, dried and powdered, that is pinched up into the nose.



straight,” and “Don’t gap and stretch yourself like that, Huckleberry. Try to be good.” Then she told me about the bad place, and I said I wished I was there. She got mad then, but I didn’t mean no harm. All I wanted was to go somewheres for a change. I wasn’t particular. She said it was wicked to say what I said. She was going to live so as to go to the good place. Well, I didn’t want to go where she was, and I made up my mind not to try for it. She said that all a body would have to do in the good place was to go around all day long with a harp and sing, forever and ever. I didn’t think much of it. But I never said so. I

asked her if she reckoned Tom Sawyer would go there, and she said no, not by a whole lot. I was glad, because I wanted Tom and me to be together.

She kept pecking at me till I got tired of it. I went up to my room with a piece of candle and set down by the window and tried to think of something cheerful. But it wasn't no use. I felt so lonesome I most wished I was dead. The stars were shining, and the leaves rustled in the woods ever so mournful. And I heard an owl who-whooing about somebody that was dead and a dog was howling. And the wind was trying to whisper something to me, and I couldn't make out what it was, so it made the cold shivers run over me. And away off in the woods I heard a ghost that couldn't rest easy in its grave. I got so downhearted and scared, I did wish I had some company.

Pretty soon a spider crawled up on my shoulder. I flipped it off, and it lit in the candle and burned. It was a bad sign and would fetch me bad luck, so I was scared and most shook the clothes off me. I got up and turned around in my track three times and crossed my breast every time. Then I tied up a lock of my hair with a thread to keep witches away, but I

was still scared. A charm like that would help you find a lost horseshoe, but I hadn't ever heard anybody say it was any way to keep off bad luck when you'd killed a spider.

I was shaking all over. The clock away off in the town went boom-boom-boom, twelve licks, and all still again—stiller than ever. Pretty soon I heard a twig snap down in the dark among the trees. Something was a-stirring. I set still and listened. Then I could just barely hear a “*me-yow! me-yow!*” That was good!

I says, “*me-yow! me-yow!*” as soft as I could, and then I put out the light and climbed out the window onto the shed and slipped to the ground.

And there was Tom Sawyer waiting for me.

## CHAPTER 2

# *Our Gang Meets in the Cave*

Tom and me went tiptoeing to the end of the widow's garden. But by the kitchen I fell over a root and made a noise. We crouched down and laid still. Miss Watson's big slave, Jim, was setting in the kitchen door. He got up and stretched his neck out about a minute, listening. Then he says, "Who dat?" He listened and come tiptoeing right to where we was. For a long time Tom and me never made a sound. Then a place on my shin got to itching, but I didn't dare scratch it. Then my ear begun to itch, and next my back right between my shoulders.

Seemed like I'd die if I couldn't scratch. If you are anywheres where it won't do for you to scratch, you will itch all over in a thousand places. Pretty soon Jim says:

"Say, who *is* you? *Where* is you? Well, I is going to set down here and listen till I hears you again."

So he set down between me and Tom and stretched his legs out till one of them most touched one of mine. My nose begun to itch. It itched till the tears come into my eyes. It itched on the inside and outside, but I didn't dare to scratch. Just then I itched in eleven different places, and I set my teeth hard to try to stand it. In a minute Jim begun to breathe heavy, and next he begun to snore.

Tom made a sign to me, kind of a little noise with his mouth, and we went creeping away on our hands and knees. Tom wanted to tie Jim to the tree for fun. But I said no, for he might wake up and we would get caught. Then Tom slipped into the kitchen to get some more candles for us to use. He got three more and laid five cents on the table for pay. I was in a fever to get away, but nothing would do Tom but he must crawl back to Jim and play some trick.

When Tom come back, we cut along the path around the garden fence and up to the steep top of the hill. Then Tom said he slipped Jim's hat off and hung it on a limb right over him. Afterwards, Jim said the witches had put him under a spell and had rode him all over the state and then set him under the trees again and hung his hat on a limb to show who done it. Next time he told it, he said they rode him down to New Orleans. After that, every time he told it he spread it more and more, till by and by he said they rode him all over the world. Jim was so proud he wouldn't hardly notice the other slaves. They would come miles to hear him tell about it. In the dark by the kitchen fire they were always talking about witches. Then Jim would come in and say, "Hm! what you know about witches?" and the slave that was talking had to take a back seat.

Jim thought he could cure anybody, and had the power to call up witches whenever he wanted to. He had that five-center piece hanging around his neck that he said the devil had given him with his own hands. The servants would pay him to see the piece, but they wouldn't touch it, because the devil had had



his hands on it. Jim got stuck up on account of having seen the devil and been rode around by witches.

Well, Tom and me looked down into the village and saw three or four lights twinkling where there was sick folks, maybe. The stars over us was sparkling ever so fine. And there was the river a mile broad, and awful still and grand. We went down the hill and found Joe Harper, Ben Rogers, and three or four more boys hid in the old tanyard. So we borrowed a skiff,<sup>1</sup> and pulled down the river two mile and a half.

Tom made everybody swear to keep our trip a secret, and then showed them a hole in the hill, right in the thickest part of the bushes. Then we lit candles and crawled in, till the neck of the cave opened wider. We ducked under a wall and went along a narrow place to a kind of room, all damplike and cold. Then Tom says:

“This band of robbers will be called Tom Sawyer’s Gang. Everybody must swear to be true to the rules. It’s written on this paper, and everybody that wants to join has got to write his name in blood.

<sup>1</sup> *skiff*, a light rowboat that is sometimes fitted with a small sail.



Every boy must stick to the band and never tell the secrets. And if anybody does anything to hurt any of our gang, one of you will be ordered to get revenge on that person and his family. And then you must not eat nor sleep until you have done it.

“The council will order you to hack a cross on them, which is the sign of the gang. And if anybody outside the gang uses our mark, he must answer to the law, and the next time be killed. And if any of the gang tells the secrets, his name will be rubbed off our list with his own blood, and his ashes will be

scattered around. And his name will never be mentioned again by the gang. He will be forgot forever."

"That's all beautiful, Tom," I says. "Did you get it out of your own head?"

"Some," he says. "But some of it come from pirate and robber books. Every high-toned gang has it."

Some thought it would be good to put our mark on the *families* of boys that told the secrets. Tom said it was a good idea, so he wrote it in.

"It wouldn't be fair," says Ben Rogers. "Here's Huck Finn—he ain't got no family."

"Well, ain't he got a father?" says Tom Sawyer.

"Yes, but you never can find him these days. He used to lay drunk with the hogs in the tanyard, but he ain't been seen for a year or more."

They was going to rule me out, because they said that every boy must have a family or somebody to kill, or it wouldn't be fair and square. Well, nobody could think of anything to do—everybody was stumped. I was most ready to cry. Then I thought of a way, and so I offered them Miss Watson—they could put their mark on her. Everybody says, "Oh, she'll do. Huck can come in." Then we all stuck a

pin in our fingers to get blood with, and I made my mark on the paper.

"Now," says Ben Rogers, "what's the line of business of this gang?"

"Nothing only robbery," says Tom.

"What are we going to rob — houses, or cattle?"

"Stuff! stealing cattle ain't robbery," says Tom.  
"That's no sort of style. We are highwaymen. We stop the stages and carriages with masks on. We take watches and money, and hold some of the people for ransom."<sup>2</sup>

"Ransom? What's that?"

"I don't know," says Tom. "But that's what they do in the books. And that's what we've got to do — take some of them to our cave."

"But how can we do it if we don't know what it is?"

"Why, blame it all, we've got to do it. Do you want to do different from what's in the books, and get things all muddled up? Anyhow, if we keep them till they're ransomed, per'aps it means that we keep them till they're dead."

<sup>2</sup> *ransom*, an amount paid to robbers for the freeing of a prisoner.

“That’s something *like*. Why couldn’t you have said that before? But a bothersome lot they’ll be — eating up everything and always trying to get loose.”

“How you talk, Ben Rogers! How can they get loose when there’s a guard over them to shoot anybody who moves a foot?”

“Huh! and we got to set up all night and never get any sleep? That’s foolishness.”

“Ben Rogers, it’s in the books,” says Tom Sawyer. “Don’t you reckon the people who made the books know what’s correct?”

“All right. But I say it’s a fool way,” says Ben. “Do we ransom the women, too?”

“Ben Rogers, if I was as simple as you, I wouldn’t let on. Ransom women, huh! That ain’t in the books. You fetch them to the cave, and you’re always as polite as pie to them. And by and by they fall in love with you and never want to go home any more.”

“Well, if that’s the way, mighty soon we’ll have the cave so full of women, and fellows waiting to be ransomed, that there won’t be any place for the robbers. But go ahead, I ain’t got nothing to say.”

Little Tommy Barnes was asleep now. When they

---

waked him up, he cried to go home to his ma and said he didn't want to be a robber any more. They called him a cry-baby and that made him mad. And he said he'd go straight off and tell all the secrets. Tom give him five cents and said we would all go home and meet next week and rob somebody.

We agreed to meet again and fix a day. We elected Tom Sawyer first captain. and Joe Harper second captain of the gang, and started home.

I climbed up the shed and crept into my window just before day. My new clothes was all greased up and covered with clay, and I was dog-tired.

## CHAPTER 3

### *We Rob the A-rabs*

**T**he next morning the widow didn't scold me about the grease and clay on my clothes. But she looked so sorry that I thought I would behave awhile if I could. Then Miss Watson took me and prayed, and said whatever I asked for I would get. So I tried it and got a fishline but no hooks. I tried and tried, and then asked Miss Watson to try for me. She said I was a fool, but she never told me why.

If a body can get anything they pray for, why don't Deacon Winn get back the money he lost on hogs? Why can't the widow get back her silver snuffbox that was stole? And why can't Miss Watson fat up? Then the widow answered me by saying

that praying would only bring "gifts of the spirit." And she told me to always help other people. I went out in the woods and turned it over in my mind a long time, but I couldn't see no advantage about that — except for the other people.

Pap hadn't been seen for more than a year. That was comfortable for me, because he used to lick me whenever he could get his hands on me. But about now, a man was found in the river drowned, twelve mile above town. He was about pap's size, and was ragged, with long hair, which was all like pap. They said he was floating on his back in the water. Then I happened to think that a drowned man don't float on his back, but on his face. So I knowed then that this man must have been a woman dressed up in a man's clothes. And I wasn't comfortable, for I judged the old man would turn up again by and by.

After about a month playing robbers, all the boys quit. We hadn't robbed nobody, just hopped out of the woods and went charging down on hog-drivers and women in carts taking their garden stuff to market. Tom Sawyer called the hogs "gold" and he called the turnips and stuff "jewels." We'd meet in



the cave and talk over what we had done and how many we had robbed. But I couldn't see no profit in it.

One day Tom sent a boy to run across town with a blazing stick, the sign for the gang to get together. Then he said he had got secret news by his spies that the next day a pack of Spanish merchants and rich A-rabs was going to camp in Cave Hollow. They would have two hundred elephants and six hundred camels and money and diamonds, with only four hundred soldiers to guard them. We would surprise them and take the whole lot. He said we must slick up our swords and guns, but you can't do much with wood and broomsticks.

I didn't believe we could lick such a crowd of Spaniards and A-rabs, but I wanted to see the camels and elephants. So I was on hand Saturday, and we all lay in wait. And then we rushed out of the woods and down the hill. But there wasn't no Spaniards and A-rabs, nor camels and elephants. It was a Sunday-school picnic, just little folks. Well, we chased the children up the hollow, but all we got was cakes and candy and a rag doll and a song book. Then the



teacher charged in and made us drop everything. I didn't see no diamonds, and I told Tom Sawyer so. He said there was loads of them there, and if I had read a book called *Don Quixote*, I'd know a magician had turned the elephants and camels all into a Sunday-school picnic. Tom said the magicians were our enemies and had turned the whole thing into a baby Sunday school, just out of spite.

"Then the thing for us to do is to go for the magicians," I says.

"Why, you blockhead," says Tom. "A magician

could call up a lot of genies,<sup>1</sup> and they would make you look like nothing. Why, they are as tall as a tree and as big around as a church."

"Well," I says, "suppose we get them genies to help *us*? How do *they* get them?"

"Why, they rub an old tin lamp, or an iron ring, and then the genies come tearing in, with thunder and lightning flashing and the smoke a-rolling. And they do what they're told to do."

"Who makes them tear around so?"

"Why, they belong to whoever rubs the lamp," Tom says. "If he tells them to build a palace forty miles long out of diamonds, and fill it full of chewing gum, or fetch an emperor's daughter from China for you to marry, they've got to do it before sunup next morning. And they have to trot that palace to whatever place you want it."

"Well," I says, "I think they are a pack of flat-heads not to keep the palace themselves. No magician would get me to drop my business and come to him for the rubbing of an old tin lamp."

<sup>1</sup> *genie*, a being who can perform magic. One who has more than human powers.

---

“Huck Finn, you’d *have* to come when he rubbed, whether you wanted to or not.”

“What! and I as high as a tree and as big as a church? All right, then — I *would* come. But I lay I’d make that man climb the high est tree there was in the country.”

“Shucks, it ain’t no use to talk to you, Huck Finn — perfect know-nothing.”

Well, I got an old tin lan p and an iron ring and went out into the woods, and rubbed and rubbed, figuring to build a palace and sell it. But no genies would come. So I judged the stuff was one of Tom Sawyer’s lies. I reckoned he believed in the A-rabs and the elephants. But as for me, I think different. It had all the marks of a Sunday school.

## CHAPTER 4

### *The Hair-Ball Fortune*

Well, winter come, and I was in school. I could spell and read and write just a little, and do numbers up to six times seven is thirty-five. I don't reckon I could ever get any further than that if I was to live forever. I don't take no stock in figures, anyway. By and by I got so I could put up with this way of living. Sometimes I played hookey and got a hiding, which did me good and cheered me up. School got easier and I got more used to the widow's ways, too. But sometimes I used to slide out and sleep in the woods and get a rest from sleeping in a bed. I liked the old ways best, but I was getting so I liked the new ones a little bit, too. The widow said I was

coming along slow but sure and she wasn't ashamed of me.

One morning I turned over the saltcellar at breakfast. I reached quick to throw some over my left shoulder and keep off the bad luck, but Miss Watson was in ahead of me. She says, "Take your hands away, Huckleberry. What a mess you're always making!" The widow put in a good word for me, but I knowed well enough *that* wouldn't keep off my bad luck. After breakfast I started out just poking around, low-spirited, and wondering where my bad luck was going to fall.

I climbed over the stile<sup>1</sup> of the front garden. An inch of snow was on the ground, and I saw boot tracks. Somebody had come up from the stone pits and stood around the stile. It was funny they hadn't come in. I got down to look at the tracks, and I noticed there was a cross on the left boot heel made with big nails, to keep off the devil. I was up in a second and flying down the hill to Judge Thatcher's. He said, "You're all out of breath. Did you come for your interest?"

<sup>1</sup> *stile*, steps to help one over or through a fence.

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"No, sir," I says. "Is there some for me?"

"Yes, over a hundred and fifty dollars. You better let me lend it out for you with your six thousand, because if you take it, you'll spend it."

"I want you to take it," I says. "I want to give you the six thousand dollars and all."

"What can you mean, my boy? Is there something the matter?"

"Please take it and don't ask any questions," I says, "and then I won't have to tell you no lies."

"O-ho! I think I see. You want to *sell* your property to me—not give it?"

Then he wrote something on a paper and read it over and says, "There. It says 'for value received.' That means I've bought it and paid you for it. Here's a dollar. Now you sign the paper." So I signed it and left.

Then I went to see Miss Watson's Jim. He had a hair-ball, from the fourth stomach of an ox, and he used to do magic with it. He said a spirit inside it knowed everything. So I told him I wanted to know was pap going to stay, for I'd found his tracks in the snow. Jim got out his hair-ball and said something

over it. Then he dropped it on the floor. Then he got down on his knees and put his ear against it and listened. But it wouldn't talk.

He said sometimes it wouldn't talk without money. Well, I had an old 10-good quarter, made of brass. I said it was pretty bad money, but maybe the hair-ball would take it, because it wouldn't know the difference. Jim bit it and rubbed it. He said he would cut open a raw Irish potato and stick the quarter in the potato all night, and next morning the brass wouldn't show and so anybody in town would take it in a minute, let alone a hair-ball. Well, I knowed a potato would do that before, but I had forgot it. Jim put the quarter under the hair-ball and listened again. And here is what Jim says:





“Your pap sometimes reckons he’ll go away, en again he reckons he’ll stay. Best way is to let him take his own way. Two angels is shadowing him, one white, en t’other black. De white one gits him to do right, den de black one sail in en bust it all up. A body can’t tell yet which one’s going to git him at de last. But you is all right. You’s going to have some trouble, en some joy. You’s going to git hurt, en you’s going to get sick. But every time you’s going to git well again. Two gals is flying about you in your life, one light, t’other dark. One is rich, en t’other one is poor. You’s going to marry de poor one first, en de rich one by en by. Keep away from de water as much as you can, en don’t run no risk, ’cause it’s wrote in de book dat you’s going to git hung.”

When I lit my candle and went up to my room that night, there sat pap—his own self!

## CHAPTER 5

# *Pap Starts a New Life*

I had shut the door to. Then I turned around, and there he was. I used to be scared of him, because he licked me. But tonight, after my first surprise when my breath sort of caught, I wasn't scared only a little.

He was most fifty, and he looked it. His hair was long and tangled and greasy and hung down, and you could see his eyes shining through like he was behind vines. His hair and mixed-up whiskers was all black, no gray. His face was white, a white to make a body sick—a fish-belly white. His clothes was just rags. One foot rested on t'other knee, and the boot on that foot was busted so that two of his



toes stuck through, and he worked them now and then. His hat laid on the floor — an old, droopy one, with the top caved in like a lid.

I stood a-looking at him, and he set there a-looking at me. I noticed the window was up—so he had climbed in by the shed. He kept a-looking me all over. By and by he says, “Clean clothes—ver✓. Think you’re a good deal of a big-bug, *don’t* you”

“Maybe I am, maybe I ain’t,” I says.

“Don’t give me none of your lip,” he says. “I ll take you down a bit before I git done with you. You’re educated, too, they say—can read and write. You think you’re better’n your father, now, don’t you?—because he can’t. Who said you might put on airs like this?—hey?—who told you you could?”

“The widow. She told me.”

“And who told the widow she could put in her shovel about a thing that ain’t none of her business?”

“Nobody never told her.”

“Well, I’ll learn her not to poke around into my affairs, bring up a boy to put on airs over his own father. And looky here—you drop that school, you hear? Your mother couldn’t read, and she couldn’t write. Nor I can’t. And I ain’t the man to stand your swelling yourself up like this—you hear?—Say, let me hear you read.”

I took up a book and begun something about General Washington and the wars. In about half a minute he fetched the book a whack with his hand and knocked it across the room. Then he says, "I had my doubts, but you can. Now looky here, I won't have you putting on this fine foolishness. I'll lay for you at school, and if I catch you there I'll tan you good. First you know you'll git religion too. I never see such a son."

He picked up a card they had give me for learning my lessons good. He mumbled to himself a minute, then he tore the card up and says:

"*Ain't* you a sweet-scented gentleman, though? A bed and bedclothes and a looking glass. And your own father got to sleep with the hogs in the tanyard. Never see such a son. I'll take these high ideas out of you! Why, there ain't no end to your airs! They say you're rich. Hey? — how's that?"

"They lie — that's how."

"Looky here, mind how you talk to me. I'm standing about all your sass I can right now. I ain't heard nothing for two days but about your being rich. You git that money tomorrow — I want it."

"I ain't got no money."

"It's a lie. Judge Thatcher's got it. You git it—I want it."

"You ask Judge Thatcher. He'll tell you I ain't got no money."

"All right. And I'll make him come across. Say, how much you got in your pocket?"

"I ain't got only a dollar, and I want that too."

"No difference what you want it for. You just shell it out."

He bit it to see if it was good, and then said he was going to get some whiskey. When he got out on the shed, he put his head back in again and cussed me. Said he was going to lick me if I didn't drop school.

Next day he was drunk and went to Judge Thatcher's to make him give up the money. Pap said he'd make the law force him. Then the judge and the widow went to law to get one of them to be my guardian. But the new judge didn't know pap, and so he said courts ought not to separate families.

That pleased the old man and he threatened to cowhide me till I was black and blue, if I didn't raise some money for him. I borrowed three dollars from

Judge Thatcher, and pap took it and got drunk and went cussing and whooping and carrying on all over town with a tin pan till midnight. Then they took him to court and jailed him for a week. But he boasted that he was boss of his son.

When pap got out, the new judge said he was going to make a man of him. So he dressed him up clean and nice and had him to breakfast and supper with his family. The new judge talked to him about not drinking, till the old man cried and said he'd fooled away his life. Now he was going to turn over a new leaf and be a man nobody would be ashamed of. The judge cried and his wife cried. And pap said nobody before had understood him. Then the judge said he believed it. And they cried again. The old man rose and held out his hand and says:

“Gentlemen and ladies all, *there's* the hand of a man that's started on a new life. And I'll never go back, mark my words. It's a clean hand now. Shake it.”

So they shook it, one after the other, and cried. The old man signed a promise never to drink no more—had to make his mark on the paper. Then

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they tucked pap into their beautiful spare room. But in the night he got powerful thirsty and climbed out by the porch roof. He traded his new coat for a jug of forty-rod, and climbed back again. But toward daylight he crawled out drunk as a fiddler, and rolled off the porch and broke his arm in two places.

The judge felt kind of sore. He said it might be a body could better the old man with a shotgun, maybe, but he didn't know no other way.



## CHAPTER 6

### *Pap Struggles with the Death Angel*

As soon as the old man was up and around again, he went for Judge Thatcher in the courts to make him give up the money. And he went for me, too, for not stopping school. A couple of times I dodged him when he met me, because now I wanted to go to school to spite him. The law was slow business, and every now and then I'd borrow two or three dollars off of the judge for pap, to keep from getting a cowhiding. Every time pap got the money, he'd get drunk and make trouble around town and get locked up. That kind of life suited him.

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He got to hanging around the widow's too much, so she told him to quit or she would make trouble for him. Well, *wasn't* he mad! He said he'd show her who was Huck Finn's boss. So one day in the spring he laid for me and caught me and took me up the river about three mile in a skiff. He crossed over to the Illinois side to an old hog cabin where the woods was thick. He had an old gun, and we lived on wlat we fished and hunted. Sometimes he locked me in and went to the store, about three mile, and traded game and fish for whiskey. Then he got drunk and licked me. The widow sent a man to get me, but pap drove him off with the gun. And then pretty soon I got used to being where I was, and I liked it—all but the lickings.

Smoking and fishing and no books nor study was lazy and jolly. Two months run along and I was all rags and dirt. Now I didn't see how I ever got to like it at the widow's—having to wash and comb up and eat off a plate and go to bed regular. Now I took to cussing again, because pap didn't care. Take it all around, times there in the woods was pretty good.

But by and by pap got too handy with his hick'ry

and I couldn't stand it—I was marks all over. And he got to locking me in, sometimes for three days. I tried to get out, but there wasn't any window big enough. And pap never left a knife or anything loose. I hunted around, and behind a roof board I found an old saw without any handle. I got under the table and started sawing the bottom log out. Pretty soon I heard pap's gun, and I hid my saw.

Pap wasn't in a good humor—so he was his natural self. He said he was downtown and everything was going wrong. His lawyer was sure he could win, but Judge Thatcher knew ways to keep putting off the trial. And people said they would try again to get me to the widow to bring up and they guessed they would win this time. This shook me up plenty because I didn't want to go back and be so shut in and "civilized." Then pap got to cussing, and cussed everything and everybody he could think of. And then he cussed them all over again to make sure he hadn't skipped any. He said if the widow tried to get me, he knew another place seven mile off where they couldn't find me. But I made up my mind I wouldn't stay on hand for that.

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He made me go to the skiff and fetch the things he had got—a big sack of corn meal, a side of bacon, some powder and shot, and a four-gallon jug of whiskey. I set down in the skiff to rest and think. I'd take to the woods when I run away, not stay in one place. I'd tramp, mostly night times, and hunt and fish to keep alive and get so far away that pap nor the widow couldn't ever find me any more. If pap got drunk that night, I'd light out. I fetched the things to the cabin, and then it was dark. While I was cooking supper, pap was taking man-size swallows out of the jug. He had been drunk over in town and laid in the street all night and he was a sight to look at. Whenever the whiskey begun to work, he most always went for the government. This time he walked back and forth and waved his arms and says:

“Call this a gov'ment. Here's the law standing ready to take a man's son which he has had all the trouble and cost of raising. Yes, and just as he's ready to go to work and give his father a rest, why, the law up and goes for him. And they call *that* a gov'ment. The law that backs old Judge Thatcher so's he can keep me out of my property! Takes a man

worth six thousand dollars and up, and jams him into an old cabin like this, and lets him go round in clothes that ain't fit for a hog. Look at my hat! The lid raises up and the rest of it goes down below my chin—looks like my head was shoved up through a joint of stovepipe. Look at that hat—for me to wear—one of the wealthiest men in this town if I could git my rights. Sometimes I've a mighty idea to leave the country for good and all. Yes, and I told them so—told old Judge Thatcher to his face. Says I, for two cents I'd leave the blamed country and never come near it again. Them's the very words."

Just then pap went head over heels over a box, and barked both shins. He hopped around the kitchen, first on one leg and then on t'other. And then he let off with his left boot and give the box a rattling kick. But it wasn't good judgment because that boot had two toes sticking out of the front end. He went down in the dirt and rolled and held his toes and cussed worse than ever.

After supper pap took the jug and shook it and peeped into it with one eye, and then said he had enough whiskey for two drunks and brain fever. I

thought as soon as he got drunk I'd steal the key. Well, soon he laid down on the floor moaning and throwing himself around. I dropped to sleep with the candle burning.

An awful scream woke me up. There was pap looking wild and skipping around every which way and yelling "Snakes!" He said there was one on his leg, and one bit his check. But I didn't see any snakes. He ran round the cabin crying "Take him off! he's biting me on the neck!" I never see a man look so wild in the eyes. He would strike and grab in the air, screaming that there was devils a-hold of him. Then he laid quiet, just moaning. Way off in the woods I could hear owls and wolves calling, and I was scared. By and by pap raised himself and listened, and says very low:

"Tramp—tramp—tramp; that's the dead. Tramp—tramp—tramp. They're coming after me! Don't touch me! your hands are cold! let go!"

Then he crawled around on all fours, begging them to let him alone. His eyes looked wilder than ever. He saw me and jumped up and started chasing me with his knife, saying I was the Angel of Death.



S. Fleischman

I tried to make him know I was Huck. But he let out a high laugh and roared and cussed and kept on chasing me.

Once he turned short, but I dodged under his arm, and he got a-hold of my jacket between the shoulders. I thought I was a goner, but I slid out of the jacket quick as lightning. He tired himself all out and dropped down with his back to the door, saying he would rest a minute and then kill me. He put his knife under him and I said he would sleep and get strong, and then he would see who was who.

I got a chair, and then climbed up easy and got down the gun. And I laid it across the chair, pointing right at pap. Then I waited for him to stir. I watched him, with the gun loaded and ready. Oh, how slow and still the time dragged on!



CHAPTER 7

## *I Fool Pap and Get Away*

**G**it up! What you doing with that gun?" The sun was shining and there stood pap over me, looking ugly and sick. He didn't know what he'd been doing. I says, "Somebody tried to get in."

"Why didn't you root me out?"

"I tried to," I says, "but I couldn't budge you."

"Well, don't stand there jawing. Go out and see if there's a fish for breakfast."

He unlocked the door, and I cleared out. I noticed pieces of limbs and bark were floating down. So I

knowed the river had begun to rise. I reckoned I would have great times now if I was over at the town. The June rise always brought logs and pieces of rafts, and I used to catch them and sell them to the wood yards and sawmill. With one eye I watched for pap, but with the other I saw a loose canoe — a beauty — about fourteen foot long. I shot out, clothes and all, for the canoe. Ther I climbed in and paddle I ashore. She was worth ten dollars, and I thought pap would be glad. Then another idea hit me, and I judged I'd hide her good. I could go down the river about fifty miles and camp, which would be better than tramping.

It was pretty close to the cabin, and I thought I heard the old man coming all the time. But I got her hid. Then I got out and looked around a bunch of trees, and there was pap just taking aim on a bird.

When pap come along, I was hard at it taking up a trotline. He cussed me for being slow, but I told him I fell in the river and that's why I was wet and took so long. We got five catfish off the lines. After breakfast we laid off to sleep up. And I got to thinking, how could I fix some way to keep pap and the

widow from following me? By and by pap raised up to drink another barrel of water, and he says:

“Another time a man comes prowling around here, I want to know. That man wasn’t here for no good. Next time, root me out, you hear?”

Then he dropped off to sleep, and I knew what he’d said had give me the very idea I wanted. About twelve o’clock we turned out and got part of a log raft—nine logs fast together. We towed it to shore with the skiff. Instead of waiting to catch more stuff, pap had to shove right to town and sell. He locked me in, and I took the saw and went to work on that log again. Before he was t’other side of the river I was out of the hole. Him and his raft was just a speck on the water away off yonder.

I loaded up the canoc with a side of bacon, the whiskey jug, some coffee, sugar, and powder and shot. I took the water bucket, the old saw, some blankets, and the skillet and coffee pot. I took fish-lines and matches, the ax, the gun—I cleaned out the place.

Then I fixed the pieces of log back and scattered the sawdust around. I put two rocks there to hold

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the piece in place so that no one would notice it. After I covered my tracks to the canoe, I looked across the river. No one was in sight, so I went out to shoot a bird. But I saw a wild pig and shot it. Then I smashed in the door with the ax to make it look like somebody had broke in. I laid the pig on the dirt floor and hacked into his throat with the ax. Next, I dragged some rocks in an old sack to the river and threw them in. You could easy see that something had been dragged over the ground. The sack sank out of sight. I did wish Tom Sawyer was there. I knowed he would take an interest in this kind of business and throw in the fancy touches.

Last, I pulled out some of my hair, blooded it good, and stuck it on the ax. And I threw the ax into the corner. Then I took up the pig careful so he wouldn't bleed, and I dumped him into the river. Next, I ripped a hole in the bag of meal and carried it to the creek about a hundred yards. The meal left a track all the way. Then I tied up the rip in the bag and took the meal to the canoe.

It was about dark now. So I dropped down the river and tied to some willows to wait for the moon

to rise. I laid down in the canoe to smoke a pipe and lay out a plan. I says to myself, they'll follow the sack to the river and drag it for my dead body. Then they'll follow the meal track and go hunting up the creek for the robbers. But they won't find me. I know Jackson's Island pretty well, and I'll go there. And then I can paddle over to town nights and pick up things I want. Jackson's Island's the place.

Then I dropped off to sleep. When I woke up I was scared, for the moon was up and the river looked miles across. I could tell by the smell that it was late.

I was ready to shove off when I heard the dull sound that comes from oars working in oarlocks. Then I saw it was one man, who come swinging up shore so close I could have touched him with the gun. It *was* pap, sure enough—and sober, too, by the way he laid his oars.

The minute he got past, I was spinning downstream quick in the shade of the bank. After about two mile and a half I struck out toward the middle of the river, because people might see me passing the ferry landing. And so I laid down in the middle of the canoe and floated, smoking my pipe and look-

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ing up into the sky. The sky looks deep when you lay down on your back under the bright moon. And I could even hear what people said at the boat landing. Pretty soon the talk got farther and farther away, and I rose up and there was Jackson's Island. It was all woods, and big and black. The current was swift, and I shot past the head of the island at a ripping rate and landed in dead water on the side toward the Illinois shore. I parted the willow branches and run the canoe into an opening I knew. When I made fast, nobody could have seen the canoe from the outside.

I looked over to the town three miles away, where four or five lights twinkled. A big lumber raft was creeping down, with a lantern in the middle of it. When it was most abreast of where I stood, I heard a man say, "Stern oars, there! steady her, boys!" I heard that just as plain as if the man was by my side. And the huge mass drifted along into the night, just a big, dark pile. The sky was a little gray now, so I went into the woods and laid down for a nap before breakfast.

## CHAPTER 8

# *I Spare Miss Watson's Jim*

When I woke up, the sun was shining down through the trees, making the ground all freckled. As I laid in the cool shade, feeling lazy, I heard a deep sound of “boom!” up the river. Pretty soon I heard it again. Through a hole in the leaves I could see a bunch of smoke laying on the river. The ferryboat was coming, and I saw the white smoke puff out of its side. And then I knew they were firing cannon over the water to make my dead body come to the top.

The river was a mile wide there, and it looked

pretty on a summer morning. So I was having a good enough time seeing them hunt for my remains if I only had a bite to eat. I was hungry. And as I laid there listening to the boon and seeing them hunt for my body, a loaf of bread come floating by me on the water. I knowed right away it had some quicksilver in it, for bread I ke this, everybody said. would float to a drowned body and stop right over it. But it went right by me. By and by along comes another one, and this time I won. I shook out the little drop of quicksilver, and set my teeth in. It was "baker's bread"—what quality folks eat—none of your cornpone.





I got a good place among the leaves, and set there on a log, munching the bread and watching the ferryboat, and very well satisfied. I lit a pipe and had a good long smoke, and went on watching. The ferryboat was floating with the current, and I figured I'd have a chance to see who was aboard when she come along because she would come in close, where the bread did. When she got near me, I laid down behind a log on the bank in a little open place and peeped through. She drifted in so close that they could have run out a plank and walked ashore. I could see pap and Judge Thatcher and Tom Sawyer and Aunt Polly and Sid and Mary and plenty more. They was all talking about the murder, when the captain broke in and says:

“Look sharp now. The current sets in closest here, and maybe his body has washed ashore and got tangled with the brush along the bank. I hope so, anyway.”

I didn't hope so. They all leaned over the rails, but they couldn't see me. Then the captain sung out, “Stand away!” and the cannon let out with a boom that almost busted my ears and made me pretty near

blind with the smoke. If they'd had some bullets, I reckon they would have got the body they was after. The boat floated out of sight around the shoulder of the island. And I could hear them boom-booming as they went on down the river. The island was three miles long, and after a while the booming died away. Then in about an hour I heard another boom, and I knew they were coming up the Missouri side, under steam. I crossed the island and watched them. And finally they dropped over to the Missouri shore and went home to the town.

Now I knew nobody else would come hunting after me. I unloaded the canoe and made me a nice camp in the woods. I caught a catfish, then slashed him open with my saw and made a campfire to cook him. Then it got dark. To keep from getting too lonesome I set on the bank and listened to the current washing by. I counted the stars, and the drift logs and rafts that come down. And then I went to bed.

Three days and three nights was no different. Then I went exploring round my island. I found some ripe strawberries and some grapes. And down near the foot of the island, I ran across the ashes of

a campfire—still smoking. My heart jumped, and I quick tiptoed away. Every now and then I stopped a second among the thick leaves and listened, but my breath come so hard I couldn't hear nothing else. If I see a stump I took it for a man. If I stepped on a stick and snapped it, I felt like a person had cut one of my breaths in two and I got only half.

I reached my camp not feeling very bold. Then I packed all my stuff and put out my fire and climbed a tree to look around. I heard and saw a thousand things, but not the other campfire. After about two hours I got down and kept on the lookout all the time. Then I says I can't live without finding out who is on the island with me. So I shoved the canoe out and let it drift quietly down to the foot of the island. Near morning I nosed the canoe in to shore.

The moon went off watch and darkness crept over the river. I took my gun and slipped out toward where I had seen the campfire. By and by I caught a sight of fire through the trees. I sneaked up and there laid a man on the ground. He had a blanket around his head and his head was nearly in the fire. I set behind a clump of bushes and kept my eyes on him

steady. It was getting gray daylight now. Pretty soon he threw off his blanket and got up and stretched, and wasn't I glad? for it was Miss Watson's Jim. I says, "Hello, Jim!" and skipped out.

He jumped and stared wild at me. Then he dropped on his knees and says: "Don't hurt me—*don't!* I ain't never done no harm to a ghost. You go on git in de river where you belongs. Don't do nothing to old Jim who was always your friend!"

Well, I wasn't long making him understand I wasn't dead. Now it wouldn't be lonesome any more. We talked along for a while. Then I says: "Jim, let's get breakfast. Make up your campfire good."

"Don't need no campfire for what I been eating—strawberries en such truck. But you got a gun en can git something to cook on de fire."

Then I went to the canoe and got meal and bacon and coffee and sugar and the skillet and the tin cups. Jim's eyes bugged out, for he couldn't understand all this. I caught a good catfish and Jim cleaned it with his knife. We ate it smoking hot. Jim was still wondering if witches done all this, for he looked

at me queer, and says: "Looky here, Huck, who was it dat was killed if it ain't you?"

I told him the whole thing, and he said Tom Sawyer couldn't get up no better plan. Then I asked him how *he* come to be here. He looked pretty uneasy and says: "If I tell you, you wouldn't tell on me, would you, Huck?"

"Blamed if I would, Jim."

"Well, Huck, I believe you. I—I *run off*. But you said you wouldn't tell."

"Honest injun, I ain't going to tell. And I ain't going back. But how come you run away, Jim?"

"Well, old Missus—dat's Miss Watson—she treats me pretty rough, but she always said she wouldn't send me to New Orleans. One day I see a slave trader come en talk to Miss Watson. En dat night I creeps to de door en hears her tell de Widow Douglas she going to sell me down to Orleans. De widow try to git her not to. En old Missus didn't want to, but she could git eight hundred dollars for me. Well, I lit out mighty quick. People was stirring, so I hid in de old shop all night. About eight or nine o'clock in de morning skiffs was going by, all full of ladies and

gentlemen talking and saying how your pap come over to town and say you's killed. So by de talk I got to know all 'bout de killing."

"But didn't they miss you, Jim, and wonder where you was?"

"I knowed dey wouldn't miss me yet, 'cause dey was going to de camp mee'ing. And dey knows I goes off wid de cattle 'bout daylight. Well, when it come dark I took out up de river road where dey ain't no houses. I knowed de dogs would track me 'fore long. En I says a raft is what I wants because it don't make no track. I shove a log ahead of me and swim halfway across de river. Den a big raft come along, en I swim behind en took a-hold. It was pretty dark, so I pulled myself up en lay down on de raft."

"Suppose you'd gone to sleep, Jim?"

"Huh! Suppose! But it was dark, Huck, en de men was up in de middle of de raft. But when I was most down to de head of de island, a man come back wid a lantern. I slid overboard en struck out for de island. De bank too steep, en I couldn't land till I gits to de foot of de island. Had my pipe en tobacco en some matches, so I could make out."

Jim stopped talking for a minute and then he pointed to the sky. "Huck, see dem young birds flying 'long yard or two? Dat's a sign of rain. Same wid young chickens, same wid de birds."

"I'll catch some of them, Jim, for breakfast."

"No, Huck, no! You catch some, en somebody die. My own pappy laid mighty sick, en someone caught a bird. Granny said he'd die, en he did. *Don't* catch one."

And Jim told me about lots more signs, too. He said you mustn't count the things you are going to cook for dinner, because that would bring bad luck. The same if you shook the tablecloth after sundown. And if a man had bees, and that man died, you must tell the bees before sunup, or the bees would all get weak and die.

Then Jim said, "But do you know, Huck, bees don't never sting folks wid weak minds?"

"I can't believe that, because I've bothered them lots of times, and they wouldn't sting me. You know all kinds of signs, Jim, but mostly bad-luck ones. Ain't there any good-luck signs?"

"Mighty few—en dey ain't no use to a body.

Why you want to know when good luck is coming? Want to keep it off? But dey's *one* good sign—if you's got hairy arms en a hairy breast, it's a sign dat you's going to be rich. Maybe you's got to be poor a long time first, so your scirits won't git low. De n you up en kill yourself if you don't know by de sign dat by en by you going to be rich."

"Jim, you got hairy arms and a hairy breast. Are you rich?"

"Been rich once, en going to be rich again. Had fourteen dollars, but I got busted. Pay ten dollars for a cow, en she up en died on my hands. En de four dollars I took to start a private bank. Den I lent de money out en lost it."

"But it's all right, Jim, as long as you're going to be rich again."

"I's rich now, come to look at it. I owns myself, en I's worth eight hundred dollars. Wish I had de money, I wouldn't want no mo'."



## CHAPTER 9

# *The House of Death Floats By*

**W**e climbed a ridge and looked around. We found a big cave in the rock, as big as two or three rooms, on the side toward Illinois. After we had hid the canoe, we carried all our stuff up to the cave. A flat place stuck out by the door, and we built our fire on it and cooked some fish. Then we spread out our blankets and ate our dinner in the cave. Pretty soon it began to get dark, and thunder and lightning come up, and it rained like cats and dogs.

Then it got darker and looked all black and blue outside, and lovely. And the rain was thick so that

the trees looked like mist. And then a blast would bend the trees down and turn up the pale underside of the leaves. A perfect ripper of wind would follow and set the branches to tossing their arms wildlike. Then would come a flash, and you could see the tree-tops waving about away off yonder in the storm. In a second then it was dark as sin. Then the thunder let off with an awful crash that sent it rumbling across the sky like rolling empty barrels downstairs — where it's long stairs and they bounce a good deal, you know.

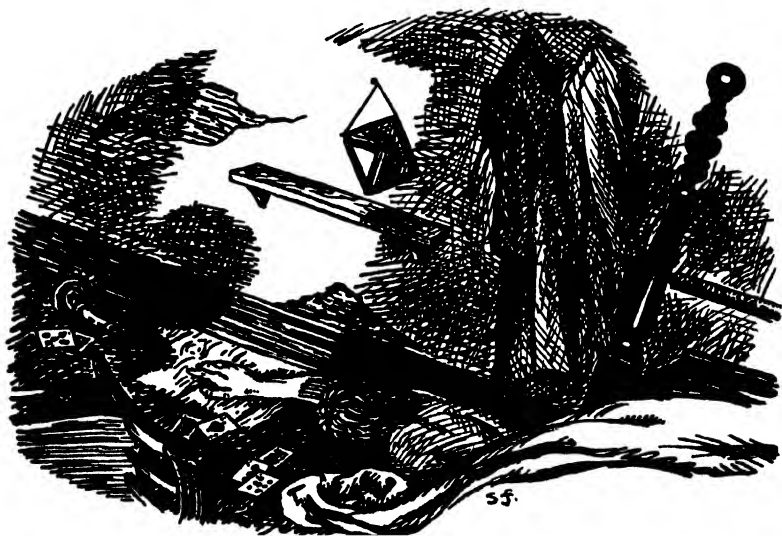
“Jim, this is nice,” I says, “I wouldn't want to be nowhere else but here. Pass me another piece of fish.”

“Well, if it hadn't been for Jim, you'd be down dar in de woods, en most gittin' drowned. Dat you would, honey. Chickens knows when it's going to rain, en so do de little birds, boy.”

The river went on raising for ten or twelve days, till it was three or four foot deep all over the island and three or four miles wide on the Illinois side. Daytimes we paddled all over the island in the canoe, winding in and out among the trees. On every broken-down tree were rabbits and snakes and

turtles. And when the island had been overflowed a day or two they got so tame, on account of being hungry, that you could paddle right up and put your hand on them if you wanted to. The ridge outside our cave was full of them. We could 'a' had pets enough if we'd wanted them. One night we caught a little section of a lumber raft—nice pine planks. It was twelve foot wide and about fifteen foot long and the top stood above water and had a solid floor.

Another night here comes a frame house, a two-story, floating down the river. We paddled out and climbed in at an upstairs window. It was getting day-



light, and through the window we could make out a bed and other things and clothes hanging against the wall. And in the far corner laid a man. I called to him, but he didn't budge. Then Jim went and looked and says:

"De man ain't asleep, he's dead. He's been shot in de back. Come in, Huck, but don't look at his face—it's too ghostly."

Jim throwed some old rags over the man's face, but I didn't want to see him. On the floor was heaps of old dirty cards, whiskey bottles, and a couple of masks made out of black cloth. Some men's and women's clothes hung on the wall. We took the clothes—they might come in handy. Things scattered made it look like people had left in a hurry. We got an old tin lantern, some sharp knives, an old bed blanket, a horseshoe, and some bottles of medicine. And Jim found a fiddle bow and a wooden leg. The straps were broke off, but it was a good leg—too long for Jim and not long enough for me. We hunted but couldn't find the other leg. It was good luck to find so many things.

Now it was broad daylight and we shoved off a

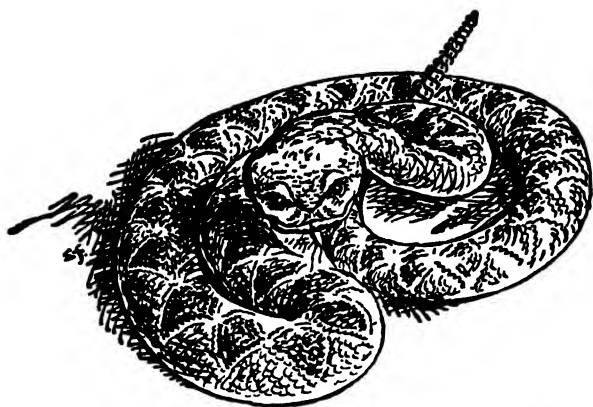
quarter of a mile below the island. Jim laid down in the canoe, and I covered him up with the blanket so people couldn't see he was a runaway slave. We crept up under the bank of the island and got home all safe.

## CHAPTER 10

# *What Comes of Handlin' Snakeskin*

Jim wouldn't talk about the dead man. He said it would fetch bad luck, and besides a man that wasn't buried would be more likely to go hunting around than one that was planted and comfortable. We found eight dollars in silver sewed in an old overcoat. That was good luck, and I says:

"Jim, when I brought in the snakeskin day before yesterday, you said it was the worst bad luck in the world to touch a snakeskin with my hands. Well, here's your bad luck — all this truck and eight dollars. I wish we had bad luck like this every day, Jim."



“Never you mind, honey, it’s coming. Mind I tell you, it’s a-coming.”

And it did come, four days later. I went to the cave to get some tobacco, and found a rattlesnake in there. I killed him and curled him up on the foot of Jim’s blanket, never thinking that a dead snake’s mate always comes and curls up around it. And when Jim flung himself on the blanket that night, the snake’s mate was there and bit him. He jumped and yelled, but I laid out the rattler with a stick. And Jim grabbed pap’s whiskey jug and began to pour it down.

He was barefooted and the snake bit him right on the heel. Jim told me to cut off the snake’s head and throw it away, and then to skin the body and roast a piece of it for him to eat and help cure him. Then

he made me take off the rattles and tie them around his arm. I slid out quiet and threw the snakes away, for I didn't want Jim to find out it was my fault.

Jim drank down the jug and got out of his head and rolled around and yelled. His foot swelled up and so did his leg. But pretty soon he got awful drunk. He was laid up for four days and four nights. Then the swelling was al' gone and he was around again. Jim said he reckoned I'd believe him next time. And he'd rather see the new moon over his left shoulder a thousand times than take up a snakeskin in his hands. Well, I was getting to feel that way myself, though I've always reckoned that looking at the new moon over your left shoulder is one of the foolishhest things a body can do. Old Hank Bunker done it once, and bragged about it. And in less than two years he got drunk and fell off a barn, and spread himself out so that he was just a kind of layer, as you may say. And they slid him edgeways between two barn doors for a coffin. But I didn't see it. Pap told me. But anyway it all come of looking at the moon that way, like a fool.

Well, the river went down, and I wanted to go



ashore and find out what was going on, so we could shove off. Jim liked the idea and said couldn't I dress like a girl? We shortened one of the gowns and I turned up my trouser legs. I tied the sunbonnet round my chin, and you could hardly see my face. I practiced a little, but Jim said I didn't walk like a girl. And I must stop pulling up my gown to get at my trouser pocket.

Just after dark I started up the Illinois side in the canoe. The current drifted me in at the bottom of the town. In a little cabin that hadn't been lived in for a long time, I saw a light burning. I peeped in at the window and saw a woman about forty years old knitting by a candle. I knew every face in that town, but not hers. This was lucky, because people might know my voice and find me out. So I knocked at the door and made up my mind I wouldn't forget I was a girl.

## CHAPTER I I

# *They're After Us*

Come in," says the woman, looking me over sharp with her little shiny eyes. "Sit down. What might your name be?"

"Sarah Williams."

"Do you live around here?"

"In Hookerville, seven miles below. I've walked all the way, and I'm all tired out."

"Hungry, too, I imagine. I'll find you something."

"No, I stopped below here at a farm. My mother's down sick and out of money, and I've come to tell my uncle Abner. He lives at the upper end of town. I ain't ever been here before. Do you know him?"

"No, I haven't lived here quite two weeks. It's

a good ways to the upper end. You better stay here all night. Take off your bonnet."

"No," I says, "I'll rest awhile and then go. I ain't afraid."

She said her husband would go with me when he come home. Then she talked about her folks, and talked and talked. She said maybe they'd made a mistake coming to this town. And I thought maybe I'd made a mistake coming here, her talking so much about her folks. But pretty soon she changed her subject to pap and me. She told about Tom Sawyer and me finding the twelve thousand dollars (only she got it twenty). And she told about me being murdered.

"We've heard about it in Hookerville," I said, "but we don't know who killed him."

"Some think old Finn did it himself. He'll never know how near he come to being hung. Then some judged it might be a runaway slave named Jim."

"Why, he—" but I quick stopped, and she never noticed my putting in.

"That Jim ran off the very night Huck Finn was killed," she says. "So there's a reward out for him

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—three hundred dollars. And there's two hundred dollars out for old Finn. You see, he come to town and told about it and was with them on the boat. And when they wanted to hang old Finn that night, he was gone. Then the next day he come back boo-hooing to Judge Thatcher for money to hunt this Jim. Finn got drunk with the money and went off with a couple of hard-looking strangers. He ain't been seen since, and they think he's waiting till this thing blows over a little. People think now he killed the boy and will get Huck's money without a long lawsuit. Oh, he's sly, I reckon. But you can't prove anything on him. Everything will quiet down and he can come back in a year maybe and walk in on Huck's money."

"Seems like it. Has everybody quit thinking that slave did it?"

"Oh, no, not everybody. But three hundred dollars don't lie around every day. An old couple next door said to me that nobody ever goes over to Jackson's Island. I'm certain I've seen smoke over there. My husband and another man are going over."

I got so uneasy I couldn't set still. So I picked up



a needle from the table and tried to thread it. But my hand shook. The woman smiled in a queer way, and so I put it down and says: "Three hundred dollars would help my mother. Is he going over tonight?"

"Oh, yes, he's gone to get the boat and another gun. They'll go after midnight."

"Couldn't they see better in the daytime?" I says.

"Yes, and so could that Jim. After midnight, when he's asleep, they'll find his campfire."

"I didn't think of that."

She looked sharp at me again, and I didn't feel a bit comfortable. Pretty soon she says: "What did you say your name was?"

"M-Mary Williams."

"Honey, I thought you said it was Sarah?"

"Oh, yes, I did — Sarah Mary Williams. Some call me Sarah and some Mary."

I was feeling better now, but I couldn't look up yet. Well, the woman felt to talking about how poor they had to live, and how the rats was as free as if they owned the place, and then I got easy again. She was right about the rats. You'd see one stick his nose out of a hole in the corner every little while. She showed me a ball of lead, and then she let it go at a rat. She missed by a lot and said oh! it hurt her arm. Would I throw at the next one? I wanted to be getting away before her husband got back, but I took the ball of lead and let drive at the next rat. If he'd have stayed where he was, he'd have been a pretty sick rat. She brought back the ball, and then she got some yarn and wanted me to help her. She put the yarn over my hands and said: "You better have the lead in your lap ready for the rats."

And she dropped the lead into my lap, and I clapped my legs together on it. Then after a minute she looked me straight in the eye and says: "Come, now, what's your real name?"

I shook like a leaf, then I says: "Please to don't poke fun at a poor girl like me. If I'm in the way —"

"No, you won't. I won't hurt you, but tell me your secret and I'll help you. So'll my old man. You're a runaway. You've been treated bad, and you made up your mind to cut. Tell me about it, and I'll keep it a secret."

So I said I'd tell her everything, if she wouldn't go back on her promise. Then I told her my father and mother was dead, and the law bound me<sup>1</sup> to a mean old farmer. I couldn't stand him any longer, so I stole some of his daughter's clothes and cleared out. I said my uncle Abner Moore might take care of me, and that was why I had come to this town of Goshen.

"Goshen, child? Why, this is Petersburg. Goshen's ten mile further up the river."

<sup>1</sup> *the law bound me.* The law forced him to work for a certain time. He was held to a term of service by the law.

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"Well, then, I guess the man who told me was drunk. And I got to be moving along to get to Goshen before daylight."

She said to wait a minute and she'd put up a lunch to eat. So she put me up a lunch and says:

"Say, when a cow's laying down, which end gets up first? Answer prompt now—and don't stop to study over it."

"The hind end, madam."

"Well, then, a horse?"

"The forward end, madam."

"Which side of a tree does the moss grow on?"

"North side."

"If fifteen cows is eating on a hillside, how many eat with their heads pointing the same direction?"

"The whole fifteen, madam."

"Well, I judge you *have* lived in the country. I thought maybe you was trying to fool me again. Now, what's your real name?"

"George Peters, madam."

"Well, try to remember it, George. Don't forget and tell me it's Elexander before you go, and then get out of it by saying it's George Elexander when I



catch you. And don't try to fool the women in that old gown. You may fool the men, but not women. And when you thread a needle, hold the needle and poke the thread at it. And when you throw at a rat, raise your hand up over your head and miss by about seven foot. And mind you, when a girl tries to catch anything in her lap, she throws her knees apart. She don't clap them together the way you did when you caught that ball of lead. Why, I spotted you for a boy when you was threading that needle. And I tried you on the other things to make certain. Now trot along to your uncle, Sarah Mary Williams George Elexander Peters. Keep the river road all the way. And if you get into trouble, send word to Mrs. Judith Loftus, that's me."

I went up the bank a little ways, then doubled on my tracks and got into the canoe and was off in a hurry. When I was about the middle, I heard the clock begin to strike. The sound come faint but clear over the water — eleven. I made the head of the island and shoved right into the woods where my old camp used to be. There I started a good fire on a dry spot. Quick then I jumped into the canoe and paddled for

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our place as hard as I could. I landed, and ran through the timber and up the ridge and into the cave. There was Jim sound asleep. I says to him:

“Rush like lightning, Jim! They’re after us!”

The way he worked getting things on the raft, I knew he was scared. We tied the canoe to the raft, put out the campfire and shoved off. If there was a boat anywhere around, I couldn’t see it. But bars and shadows ain’t good to see by. We slipped along in the shade past the foot of the island, dead still — never saying a word.

## CHAPTER 12

### *Let Blame' Well Alone*

**T**he raft seemed to go mighty slow, and it was past midnight before we got below the island. If a boat was to come along, we planned to take to the canoe and break for the Illinois shore. It was lucky one didn't, for we hadn't put the gun or fishing line or anything to eat in the canoe. It wasn't good judgment to put *everything* on the raft. Now if the men hunting Jim should go to the island, they'd watch my campfire and wait right there for Jim. Anyway, they didn't get us.

At daybreak we tied up to a *towhead* in a bend on the Illinois side. A towhead is a sand bar that has cottonwoods on it as thick as rake teeth. We cut off

branches and hid our stuff. And all day we watched the rafts and steamboats spinning down on the Missouri side, and some others fighting up the big river in the middle.

When it began to get dark, we looked up and down the river. Then Jim took some of the top boards of the raft and built a snug wigwam to get under in hot weather and rainy and to keep the things dry. We raised the floor so that all our stuff was out of reach of steamboat waves. Right in the middle of the wigwam we put a layer of dirt with a frame around it to hold it in place. On this we could build our fire when the weather was bad. We set up a forked stick for the lantern, to keep us from getting run over when we saw a steamboat coming.

The second night we run with a current that was making about four mile an hour. We caught fish and talked and took a swim now and then so we wouldn't get sleepy. Somehow, we didn't feel like talking loud and laughing. I guess it made us feel blue, drifting down the big river, laying on our backs and looking up at the stars. We had mighty good weather and nothing happened to us that night.

Every night we passed towns, some of them away up on black hillsides, nothing but just a twinkling bed of lights. The fifth night we passed St. Louis, which looked like the whole world lit up. They used to say there was twenty or thirty thousand people there, but I never believed it till I saw that wonderful spread of lights on that still night — no sound at all.

Nights I'd slip ashore at some little village, and buy ten cents' worth of meal or bacon. And sometimes I'd lift a chicken that wasn't roosting comfortable. Pap always said, take a chicken when you get a chance, because if you don't want him yourself you can easy find somebody that does, and a good deed ain't ever forgot. Pap always took the chicken himself, but that is what he used to say, anyway.

He said it wasn't no harm to borrow things if you meant to pay them back sometime. But the widow said that wasn't anything but a soft name for stealing. Jim said he reckoned the widow was partly right and pap was partly right. He said the best way would be for us to pick out something from the list that we wouldn't borrow any more. We settled it fine by giving up crabapples, which ain't ever good.

Mornings before daylight I'd slip into a field and get a watermelon or pumpkin or some new corn. Sometimes we shot a wild duck that got up too early in the morning or didn't go to bed early enough in the evening. Take it all round, we lived pretty high.

The fifth night below St. Louis we had a big storm with a power of thunder and lightning, and the rain poured down in a solid sheet. We stayed in the wigwam and let the raft drift. The lightning showed a big straight river ahead with high rocky bluffs on both sides. By and by I saw a steamboat that had killed herself on a rock, and our raft was drifting right for her. The flashes showed part of her upper deck above water and a chair by the big bell with an old felt hat on the back of it. Well, it being night and stormy, it was all like a mystery. I felt just the way any other boy would when I see that wreck laying there so mournful and lonesome in the middle of the river. And I wanted to get aboard her and look around. So I says, "Let's get on her, Jim."

"I don't want to go fooling on no wreck," Jim says. "Better let blame' well alone, as de good book says. Like as not a watchman on dat wreck."

“Watchman your grandmother,” I says. “Nobody ain’t going to risk his life for a texas<sup>1</sup> and a pilot house<sup>2</sup> on a night like this. And besides, we might borrow something worth having out of the captain’s stateroom. Stick a candle in your pocket, Jim, and we’ll go searching. Tom Sawyer would never go by this thing. He’d call it an adventure and he’d land on that wreck if it was his last act.”

Jim didn’t want to, but he give in. The wreck showed up in the lightning flashes and we made fast. We sneaked down the slope of the deck toward the texas, feeling our way slow. We climbed over the skylight to the captain’s door and, by jimminy, away down through the hall we saw a light and heard voices. Jim said he was feeling powerful sick, and we both was going to start for the raft. But just then I heard somebody begging, “Oh, please don’t, boys! I swear I won’t ever tell!”

Another voice said, pretty loud: “It’s a lie, Jim Turner. You’ve always had more than your share because you swore you’d tell. You’re a lying dog.”

<sup>1</sup> *texas*, cabin or rear deck containing officers’ quarters.

<sup>2</sup> *pilot house*, an enclosed place forward on the upper deck of a ship that shelters the steering wheel and the pilot.





And to myself I says that Tom Sawyer wouldn't back out now. So I crept on my hands and knees in the dark till I could see a man on the floor, stretched out and tied hand and foot. Two men stood over him, one with a lantern and one with a pistol. He kept pointing the pistol at the man's head and saying: "I'd *like* to, and I ought to—you mean dog!"

The man on the floor would beg and say he'd never tell. And the man with the lantern would laugh and say: "You never said no truer thing!" And then, "Hear him beg! He'd 'a' killed us both if he could. Jim Turner, you won't threaten anybody any more. Bill, put up that pistol."

"I'm for killing him, Packard," says Bill, "the way he killed old Hatfield."

"But I don't *want* him killed, and I've got reasons."

Packard hung his lantern on a nail and started right toward me in the dark, and then motioned to Bill. I crawled into a stateroom on the upper side. They stopped by the door, and I quick climbed up into one of the berths. Here I was cornered and sorry I come. My heart was going thump-thump, because

they stood right beside me and talked, so close I could smell the whiskey they'd been having. Bill says:

"After the row we've had, Turner'll tell tales. I'm for putting him out of his troubles."

"So am I," says Packard, very quiet. "But listen to me. Shooting's good, but there's quieter and safer ways. We'll gather up the stuff, then shove for shore. This wreck is going to break up and wash down the river, and Turner'll be drowned. See? I wouldn't kill a man if I could get around it. It ain't good morals."

"But suppose she don't break up and wash off?"

"We can wait two hours and see, can't we?"

So they started, and I quick got out. It was dark as black cats, but I said "Jim!" in a kind of coarse whisper, and he answered right by me. "Quick, Jim! there's a gang of murderers in here, and if we don't find their boat and set it drifting down the river, one of them will be in a bad fix. We *must* find their boat. Quick! I'll hunt this side, you hunt the other. Start from the raft!"

"Lordy! lordy! Raft? Dey ain't no raft no more! She done broke loose en gone! — en here *we* is!"

## CHAPTER 13

# *Stealing from the Walter Scott*

**W**ell, I caught my breath and most fainted. Shut up on a wreck with such a gang! But we'd *got* to find their boat. We had to have it for ourselves. So we went a-quaking and shaking down the side, hunting. It seemed a week before we got to the stern. No sign of a boat. So now we climbed over forward on the skylight, which was part in the water. When we got pretty close to the cross-hall door, there was the skiff, sure enough! I'd have been in it in a second, but just then the door opened and one of the men stuck his head out a couple feet from me.

I thought I was a goner. But he jerked back in again and says:

“Put that blamed lantern out of sight, Bill.”

Then he come and tossed a bag of something into the boat. They both got in, and Packard says to shove off. I trembled so I could hardly hang on. Then Bill says: “Hold on he’s got his share of the money!”

“No use to take truck and leave money,” says Packard.

So they went back. The door slammed and in a half second I was in their boat, and Jim tumbled in after me. We hardly breathed. I cut the rope and we went gliding swift along, dead silent. In a second or two we was below the wreck and the darkness soaked her up. We was safe and knowed it.

Farther downstream we saw their lantern show like a little spark in the texas door, and we knowed that the rascals had missed their boat, and they was in just as much trouble now as Jim Turner was.

Well, we felt safe as we took out after our raft. But now for the first time I began to feel sorry for those men. It seemed dreadful for even murderers to

be in such a fix. I thought to myself that sometime *I* might be a murderer even, and then how would I like it? Anyway, I says to Jim:

“The first light we see, Jim, we’ll land in a good hiding place below it, and then I’ll go and fix up some kind of yarn and go and save those men, so they can be hung when their time comes.”

Then pretty soon it begun to storm worse than ever. The rain poured down and not a light showed as we went booming down the river. The lightning struck across the sky, and by and by a flash showed us something black ahead. We pulled hard and soon found it was our raft, and we made for it. Now we had our truck back, besides all that gang had stolen and put in their skiff. We piled it all on the raft, and I told Jim to float along down and keep a light burning till I come. We saw a light on the shore and I shoved for it.

Soon there was more lights on the hillside, and I knowed it was a village. Pretty soon I come to a ferryboat, and the light I seen was a lantern hanging on it. I looked around and found the watchman asleep. Then I give his shoulder two or three little

shoves and begun to cry. He opened his eyes slow and stretched and says: "Hello, what's up? Don't cry, boy. What's the trouble?"

I says: "Pap and mam and sis and —" Then I cried hard, and he says:

"Oh, hold up, don't take on so! We all have troubles, and it'll come out all right. What's the matter with 'em?"

"They're — they're — are you the watchman?"

"Yes," he says, straightening up. "I'm the captain and the owner and the mate and the pilot and the watchman and head deck hand. And sometimes I'm the freight and passengers. I ain't rich as old Jim Hornback, and can't throw money around like him and be as good to Tom, Dick, and Harry. But I told him I wouldn't trade places with him. Says I —"

I broke in here and says: "They're in an awful lot of trouble, and —"

"Who is?"

"Why, pap and mam and sis and Miss Hooker. And if you'll take your ferryboat and go to that wreck —"

"What wreck? You mean the *Walter Scott*?"

“Yes.”

“Good land! what are they doing there, for gracious sakes? They’ll have to get off mighty quick. How’d they ever get in such a fix?”

“Well, Miss Hooker was a-visiting at—the town above—”

“Yes, at Booth’s Landing—go on.”

“Well, she started over on the horse ferry with her servant, and they lost their steering oar and then slammed right into the wreck, and they was all lost but Miss Hooker—her servant woman and the horse and the ferryman—but she made a grab and got on the wreck. Then after dark we come along with our raft and hit right on that wreck—and we was all saved but Bill Whipple—and oh, he was the best fellow—I most wished it had been me, I do.”

“By George! this beats me! What did you all do?”

“Well, we yelled and yelled. But it’s so wide there we couldn’t make nobody hear. I was the only one that could swim, so pap said I’d have to try, and I struck out for shore. And Miss Hooker said she knew if I come here her uncle would help us. Now if you’ll go and—”

“By Jackson, I’d like to. But who’s going to *pay* for it? Will your dad—”

“Well, Miss Hooker told me particular that her Uncle Hornback—”

“Great guns! is *he* her uncle? Look here, sonny-- see that light over yonder! That’s Jim Hornback’s. It’s only about a mile over there, so you run over and tell him I’ll have Miss Hooker safe. Now hurry right along.”

I struck out for the light, but as soon as he had turned the corner, I went back and got into my skiff. So I set there and watched him take the ferryboat out, and I was feeling rather comfortable on account of taking so much trouble for that tough gang. I wished the widow knowed about it. I judged she would be proud of me for helping them, because rascals and deadbeats is the kind the widow and good people takes the most interest in.

I see the ferryboat go for the wreck, because this man would know Miss Hooker’s Uncle Hornback would want them saved. But the storm was too heavy, and the ferryboat went in for shore. And I went booming down the river.



It did seem a powerful long time before Jim's light showed up, and then it looked a long way off. And by the time I got to the light, it was beginning to get a little gray in the east. So Jim and me struck for an island and hid the raft and sunk the skiff. Then we turned in and slept like dead people.

## CHAPTER 14

### *Fooling Poor Old Jim*

W e judged that three nights more would fetch us to Cairo, at the bottom of Illinois where the Ohio River comes in. Then we would sell our raft and go on a steamboat up the Ohio among the free states and then be out of trouble. But the second night a fog come in, and we made for a tow-head. I got in the canoe and paddled to shore. I tried to get the raft tied up, but all I could find was little cottonwoods to tie to. The raft come booming along so lively, she tore off the cottonwoods and off she went down the river. It made me sick and scared, for you couldn't see twenty yards. I jumped into the canoe again and grabbed the paddle. But she didn't

come. I was in such a hurry I hadn't untied her. My hands shook I was so excited, for Jim was on that raft.

As soon as I got started I took out after him, hot and heavy. But I shot into solid white fog and was afraid to paddle, for I might run into the bank. So I floated, but it was mighty scary business. I called and listened. Somewheres I heard an answer, and I went tearing after it. The next time I heard it, I was heading to the right of it and not gaining on it either.

I did wish Jim would think to beat a tin pan so I could follow him, for now I was all mixed up. His shout kept changing its place, for nothing don't *seem* natural nor *sound* natural in a fog. In about a minute I come booming along the bank with smoky ghosts of trees on it and the current tearing by. Then it was just a wall of white again. All I could hear was my heart pound. I didn't draw a breath. I just listened and tried to figure out where Jim and the raft was.

I was floating four or five miles an hour, but you don't ever think of that. You *feel* like you are laying dead still on the water, and if a snag slips by, you don't think how fast *you're* going, but just how fast

the snag is tearing along. After about an hour I knew what the matter was. I was running beside an island, and Jim had gone down the other side. It might be five or six miles long, and it was lonesome, out in a fog that way. For about a half hour I whooped every once in a while. And at last I heard an answer a long ways off. And I could hear the wash of the current against the old dead brush that hung over the banks of the island. Well, you never heard a man dodge around so and change places so quick and so much.

— Soon I was in the open river again, and I thought maybe Jim had been run up on a snag. I laid down in the canoe, but I didn't want to go to sleep. I guess I did take a long cat nap, for when I woke up, the stars was shining bright, the fog was gone, and my canoe was spinning backwards down a big bend. I thought I was dreaming, and things seemed to come up dim out of last week. The river was wide here, with tall, thick trees on both banks.

I looked away downstream, and seen a black speck on the water. I took after it. But when I got to it, it wasn't nothing but a couple of saw logs made fast together. Then I see another speck and chased that.



It was the raft. When I got to it, Jim was setting there with his head between his knees asleep. An oar was smashed off and leaves and branches and dirt clung to the raft. So she'd had a rough time.

I made fast, then climbed up and laid down on the raft, right under Jim's nose. I began to yawn and stretch my arms out against Jim, and says: "Hello, Jim, have I been asleep? Why didn't you stir me up?"

"Goodness gracious, is dat you, Huck? En you ain't drowned? No, you ain't dead? You's back again, live en sound—de same old Huck, thanks to goodness!"

"What's the matter, Jim?" I says. "You been a-drinking? Talking about my coming back, and all that stuff?"

"Huck — Huck Finn, how's I had a chance to be drunk? You look me in de eye. Now, *ain't* you been gone away?"

"Gone away? I ain't been anywheres."

"Well, looky here, something's wrong. Is I *me*? or who *is* I? Is I *here*? or *where* is I?"

"Well, I think you're here, plain enough, but I think you're a tangle-headed old fool, Jim."

"Well, answer me dis — didn't you give out de line to make fast to a towhead?"

"What towhead? I ain't seen no towhead."

"En didn't de line pull loose en leave you en de canoc behind in de fog?"

"What fog? I don't see no fog."

"Why, de fog dat's been around all night. Didn't you whoop, en didn't I whoop? En didn't I bang into a lot of islands, en most git drowned?"

"Well, this is too many for me, Jim. I ain't seen no fog, nor no islands, nor no troubles, nor nothing. I been setting here talking with you all night till you went to sleep about ten minutes ago, and I reckon I done the same. You couldn't have got drunk in that time. So of course you've been dreaming."

"How's I going to dream all dat in ten minutes?"

"Well, hang it all, you did dream it, because there didn't any of it happen."

Jim studied over it, then he says: "If it ain't de powerfulest dream I ever see. En I ain't ever had no dream before dat tired me out like dis one has."

"Well, tell me about it, Jim."

So Jim set out to tell me what the dream meant. The first towhead, he said, stood for a man that would try to help us. But the current was another man that would get us away from him. The whoops were warnings to be on guard. The lot of towheads were troubles we was going to get into with quarrelsome men and mean folks. And if we could get out of the fog, it meant we'd be in the free states. Then I pointed to the leaves and dirt on the raft, and to the smashed oar, and asked Jim what these stood for. Jim looked at this mess and then at me, without ever smiling. He says:

"I's going tell you. When I was all wore out wid work en calling in de fog, my heart was most broke 'cause you was lost. En when I wake up en find you back, de tears come. En all you was thinking 'bout

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was how could you make a fool out of old Jim wid a lie."

Then Jim got up slow and walked into the wigwam without saying anything but that. I felt so mean about what I'd done that I set down and did some hard thinking. Then I went in and asked Jim's pardon. And I wasn't ever sorry for asking it, neither. I didn't do him no more mean tricks and I wouldn't 'a' done that or e if I'd knowed it would make him feel that way.



## CHAPTER 15

# *The Rattlesnake Skin Does Its Work*

Well, that day when we was tied up, we looked over the stuff the gang had stolen off the wreck: boots and blankets and clothes and a lot of books and a spy-glass and tobacco. We laid off all the afternoon in the woods, talking and looking at the books. I told Jim all about what happened inside the wreck, and I said these kind of things was adventures.

In one of the books I read to Jim about kings and dukes and other nobles, and the style they put on, and how they called each other "Your Majesty," and "your Grace," and "Your Lordship." And Jim's

eyes bugged out. He says, "I didn't know dey was so many kings, just old King Solomon is all I knowed. How much do a king git?"

"Get? Why, a thousand dollars a month," I says.

"En what dey do, Huck?"

"*They* don't do nothing. They just set around except maybe when there s a war. The king fusses with his nobles, and if everybody don't do what he wants, he slices off their heads."

"Dey say dat Solomon de wisest king dat ever live. But I don't take no stock in dat. You know de story 'bout dat baby he going to chop in two?"

"Yes, the widow told me all about it."

"Just 'spose now I's Solomon, en dis here dollar bill is de baby. Two women claims it. I takes en cuts de bill in two an gives half to each. Can't buy nothing wid half a bill. And what use is half a baby?"

"But, Jim, you missed the point."

"I reckon I knows sense when I sees it. It all lays in de way King Solomon was raised. Now you take a man dat's got only one or two children. Is dat man going to be wasteful of children? But you take a man wid a million wives and five million children

running round de house, a child or two, more or less, don't make no difference to Solomon."

If Jim got an idea in his head, there wasn't any way of getting it out. So I quit wasting words.

That night we started out behind a raft that was as long going by as a Fourth of July parade. She had four long sweeps<sup>1</sup> at each end and carried about thirty men, likely. She had five big wigwams aboard, wide apart, and an open campfire in the middle, and a tall flagpole on each end. There was a power of style about her. Being a raftsman on that was *something!*

The night was hot and the wide river was walled with big trees. We couldn't see a light, and we wondered if we'd know Cairo when we got to it. I'd heard that Cairo had only about a dozen houses, and if they didn't happen to be lit up, we wouldn't know it was a town. Jim said if the two big rivers joined together there, that would show. But I said maybe we might think we was passing the foot of an island and coming into the same old river again.

There wasn't nothing to do now but to look out

<sup>1</sup> *sweeps*, long poles or oars used to manage a raft or flatboat.

sharp for the town, and not pass it without seeing it. Jim said he'd be mighty sure to see it, because he'd be a free man the minute he seen it, but if he missed it he'd be in slave country again and no more show for freedom. Every little while he jumps up and says, "Dar she is!" But it wasn't.

He said it made him all over trembly and feverish to be so close to being free. It made me the same just to hear him, now that he *was* most free. And who was to blame for it? Why, *me*. I couldn't get that out of my conscience<sup>2</sup> nohow nor noway. I tried to make out to myself that *I* wasn't to blame. How could I be? for *I* didn't run Jim off from his rightful owner.

But every time, conscience up and says: "But you knowed he was running for his freedom, and you could have paddled ashore and told somebody." That was so. I couldn't get around that no way. Then conscience would say:

"What had poor Miss Watson done to you that you could see her lose her slave, worth eight hundred

<sup>2</sup> *conscience*, sense of right and wrong. The ideas and feelings within a person that give him a sense of what is right and what is wrong.

dollars? What did that poor old woman do to you that you could treat her so mean? Why, she tried to learn you your book and your manners and tried to be good to you. *That's* what *she* done."

I got to feeling so mean and miserable I most wished I was dead. Every time Jim danced around and says, "Looks like Cairo!" it went through me like a shot. Jim talked out loud while I was talking to myself. He was saying that when he got to a free state, he would save every cent, and then he'd buy his wife back. She was owned by a farmer near Miss Watson's. And then they'd both work to buy the two children. And if their master wouldn't sell them, he and his wife would get somebody to go steal them.

It most froze me to hear such talk. He wouldn't ever dared to talk so before. Just see what a difference it made in him the minute he was near free. Thinks I, this is what comes of my not thinking. Here was this slave, which I had as good as helped to run away, coming right out flat-footed and saying he would steal his *own* children—children that belonged to a man I didn't even know. A man that hadn't ever done me no harm.

I was sorry to hear Jim say that. It lowered him in my mind. My conscience got to stirring me up hotter than ever, until at last I says to it: "Let up on me. It ain't too late yet. I'll paddle ashore at the first light, and tell he's a runaway!" Then I felt light as a feather with my troubles all gone. By and by a light showed. Jim sings out "We's safe, Huck! we's safe! Dat's de good old Cairo at last! I just knows it! "

"I'll take the canoe, Jim, ' I says, "and go and see. "

He jumped and got the canoe ready and put his old coat on the bottom for me to set on. And he give me the paddle. And as I shoved off, Jim says: "I'll be shouting for joy, en I'll say it's all 'count of Huck. I couldn't ever been a free man if it hadn't been for Huck. Huck done it. Jim won't ever forget Huck, de best friend old Jim ever had, de *only* friend old Jim's got now!"

I was paddling off, all in a hurry to tell on Jim, when he says this. It seemed to take all the tuck out of me. I went along slow and wasn't right down certain whether I was glad I started. Then Jim says: "Dar you goes, de old true Huck, de only white gentleman dat ever kept his word to old Jim!"

Well, I just felt sick. But I says, "I *got* to do it—I can't get *out* of it." Right then along comes a skiff with two men in it with guns. One says to me:

"What's that yonder?"

"A piece of raft," I says.

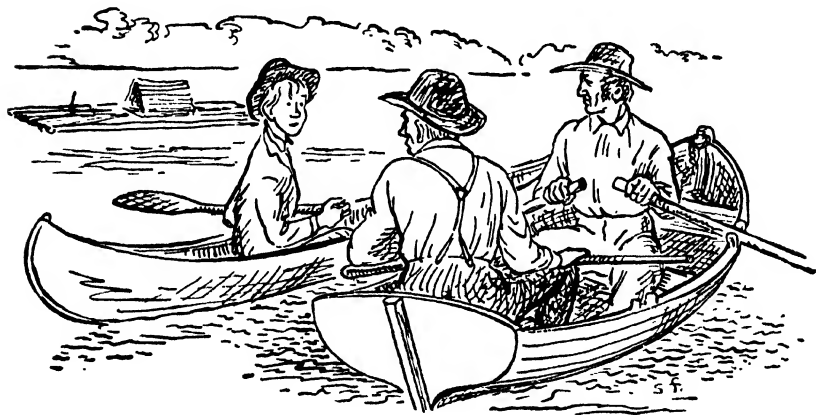
"Any men on it?"

"Only one, sir."

"One, huh? there's five slaves run off tonight above the bend. Is your man white or black?"

I didn't answer up prompt, for the words wouldn't come. I tried to, but I wasn't man enough. So I up and says, "He's white."

"I reckon we'll go and see for ourselves," says the man.



"I wish you would," says I, "because pap's sick, and so's Mam and Mary Ann."

"Oh, we're in a hurry, boy. But I suppose we've got to. Come along."

When he'd made a stroke or two, I says: "Pap'll be mighty obliged to you. Everybody goes away when I ask them, and I can't do it by myself."

"That's odd. Say, boy. what's the matter with your father?"

"It's the—a—the—well, it ain't anything much."

Their boat was most to the raft, and they both stopped rowing. One looked at me and says: "Boy, that's a lie! Answer up, now. What is the matter with your father?"

"Don't leave us, please!" I begged. "It's the—the—if you'll just let me throw you the headline, you won't have to come near the raft—please do!"

"Set her back, John! set her back!" says one. And they backed water. "Blast it, I just expect the wind has blowed it to us. Your pap's got the smallpox, and you know it. Do you want to spread it all over?"

"Well," says I, like I was crying, "everybody I told just went away and left us."



"Poor devil, there's something in that. We're sorry, but—well, hang it, *we* don't want the small-pox, you see. But listen to me—don't try to land here or you'll smash things up. And you wouldn't get any help here—that's only a wood yard yonder. Float down about twenty miles—don't stop here—and you'll come to a town on the left-hand side of the river. Now, remember, we're trying to do you a favor, so you put twenty miles between us. Tell them your folks are down with *chills* and you need help. Don't be a fool and let people *guess* what's the matter."

"Yes, sir—sirs," I sniffled. "I'll do that."

"Say, I reckon your father's poor, and I want to help him. Here, I'll put a twenty-dollar gold piece on this board. You get it when it floats by. I feel mighty mean to leave you, but it won't do to fool with smallpox."

"Hold on, Parker," says the other man, "here's twenty for me. Good-by, boy."

"Good-by," says the one called Parker. "If you see any runaway slaves, get help and catch them, and you can make money by it."

"Yes, sir. Good-by, sirs," I says. "I won't let no runaways get away from me — if I can help it."

I got on board the raft, feeling bad and low, for I knowed I'd done wrong. And I saw it wasn't any use for me to try and learn to do right. Then I thought a minute and says to myself: Suppose you'd done right and give Jim up, would you feel better than what you do now? No, I says, I'd feel just as bad. Then something inside me says: What's the use to do right when it's troublesome to do right and it ain't no trouble to do wrong, and you get just as much for it? I couldn't answer that. So I reckoned I wouldn't bother no more about it — I'd just do whatever come handiest at the time.

I went into the wigwam. Jim wasn't there, but when I called, he answered. He'd slipped into the water ready to swim ashore. He says, "Don't talk loud, Huck, but lawsy, didn't you fool dem? I 'spect you save old Jim — old Jim ain't never forgit you for dat, honey."

Then we talked about the money — twenty dollars apiece. Jim said he could spend it in the free states. And twenty miles to the next town wasn't far. And

Jim began fixing things in bundles, ready to leave the raft. About ten that night we saw lights, and I took the canoe to ask about the town. A man with a skiff was setting a trotline. He said that place wasn't Cairo and to go on and not bother him. We passed another town before daylight. I was going out again, but it was high ground so I didn't go. No high ground about Cairo. I begun to wonder. So I says to Jim, "Maybe we went by Cairo in the fog that night."

"Don't let's talk about it, Huck. Poor man can never have no luck—never. I always 'spected dat rattlesnake skin wasn't done wid its work."

"I wish I'd never seen that rattlesnake skin, Jim."

"Don't blame yourself, Huck. You didn't know."

When it was daylight, we could see the clear Ohio water near shore, and the big Muddy outside. So it was all up with Cairo. Of course we couldn't take the raft upstream. We'd have to wait till dark, then start back in the canoe. We'd have to take our chances. So we slept all day in the cottonwoods, and at dark went back to the raft. The canoe was gone!

We didn't say a word, for finding fault might bring us more bad luck—and keep on fetching it, too, till we knowed enough to keep still. But anybody that don't believe yet that it's foolishness to handle a snakeskin will believe it now if they read on and see what more it done to us. We knew we'd have to go on down with the raft till we got a chance to buy a canoe to go back in. To borrow one, like pap says, might set people after us. Well, after dark you can't always tell the shape of the river, and we lit the lantern.

We heard a steamboat pounding up the river, but we didn't see her good till she was close. She aimed right for us. Often they do that and try to see how close they can come without touching. Sometimes the wheel bites off a sweep and then the pilot sticks his head out and laughs, and thinks he's mighty smart.

Well, this one looked like a black cloud with rows of glowworms around it. But all of a sudden we saw her wide-open engine doors shining like red hot teeth, and her huge bow hanging right over us. There was a yell, the jingling of bells to stop the engines, and a lot of loud cussing and whistling of steam. Jim went



overboard on one side and I on t'other, as she come smashing straight through the raft.

I dived — and I aimed to find the bottom, too, because a thirty-foot wheel had got to go over me and I wanted it to have plenty of room. I stayed under water till I was nearly busting, then I bounced to the top. The boat started her engines again ten seconds after she stopped them, for they never cared much for raftsmen. She churned along up the river and out of sight in the thick weather.

I sung out for Jim, but no answer. A floating board was going by in the dark, so I grabbed it and struck out for shore. The drift of the current took

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me, and after a good long while I landed and climbed up the bank.

I set out and went poking along over rough ground for a ways, and then I run across a big old-fashioned double loghouse. I tried to rush by, but a lot of dogs jumped out and went to barking at me, and I knowed better than to move a foot.

CHAPTER 16

*The Grangerfords  
Take Me In*

**I**n about a minute somebody spoke out of a window without putting his head out, and says, "Who's there?"

"It's me."

"Who's me?"

"George Jackson, sir."

"What do you want?"

"Nothing, sir, only to go along by. But the dogs won't let me."

"What are you prowling around here for, this time of night — hey?"

"I fell overboard off of the steamboat, sir."

"Oh, you did, did you? If you're telling the truth, nobody'll hurt you. But don't try to budge from where you are. Hey! Some o' you call Bob and Tom. Strike a light and fetch the guns. George Jackson, anybody with you?"

"No, sir, nobody."

I heard the people stirring around the house and saw a light. The man sung out: "Snatch that light away, Betsy. Put it on the floor beside the front door. All ready, boys, take your places. Now, George Jackson, do you know the Shepherdsons?"

"No, sir, I never heard of them."

"Well, that may be. Step forward—and mind, don't hurry. Push the door open yourself, just enough to squeeze in, do you hear?"

I couldn't have hurried if I'd tried to. The dogs followed behind me. I heard locks rattling, and I put my hand on the door and pushed it open a little. The candle was on the floor, and three big men with guns were all looking at me. One of the men was old and gray. And the sweetest old gray-headed lady was there, and back of her stood two young women.





The old gentleman says, "Come in," and then he locked and barred the door. They held the candle to look at me, and all said: "Why, *he* ain't a Shepherdson—no Shepherdson about him." Then the old man felt me all over to see if I was armed, and told me to make myself easy. Then the old lady says, "Why, bless you, Saul, the poor thing's as wet as can be. And I reckon he's hungry."

"True for you, Rachel," he says. "I forgot."

So the old lady called a servant and told her to quick get me something to eat. And she said to one of the girls to wake up Buck. But just then Buck comes in. And the sweet old lady said to him to take this little stranger and get the wet clothes off from him and dress him up in some of his dry ones.

He was about my age, thirteen or fourteen, with just a shirt on. He was digging one fist into his eyes, and dragging a gun along with the other one. He says, "Ain't there no Shepherdsons around?"

"Never mind, Buck," laughs the old man, "you'll have your chance. They might have killed us all, you've been so slow in coming."

We went upstairs to his room and I put on some of his clothes. While I was at it he asked me what my name was and started to talk about a bluejay and a rabbit he had caughted in the woods. And he asked me where Moses was when the candle went out. I said I didn't know. I hadn't heard about it before, noway. "Well, guess," he says.

"How'm I going to guess," says I, "when I never heard tell of it before?"

"But you can guess, can't you? It's just as easy."

"*Which* candle?" I says.

"Why, *any* candle," he says.

"I don't know where he was," says I. "Where was he?"

"Why, he was in the *dark*! That's where he was!"

"Well, if you knowed where he was, what did you ask me for?"

"Why, blame it, it's a riddle. Say, how long are you going to stay here? We can just have booming times. They don't have no school now. Do you own a dog? I've got a dog and he'll go in the river and bring out sticks. Do you like to comb up Sundays and all that kind of foolishness? I don't. Are you all ready? — then come along, old horse."

Cold corn bread, cold meat, butter, and butter-milk — they ain't nothing better that I've come across yet. Buck and his ma and all of them smoked cob pipes, except the two young women. They all asked me questions. I told them how pap and me and all our family had lived on a little farm down at the bottom of Arkansas, and my sister Mary Ann ran off and got married, and Bill went to hunt them, and

none of them was heard from any more. And Tom and Mort died, and pap's troubles killed him. So when he died I took what there was left and started up the river and fell overboard. So they said I could have a home with them as long as I wanted it.

It was most daylight now. and I went to bed with Buck. When I waked up in the morning, I had forgot what my name was. So I tried to think. And when Buck waked up I says, "Buck, I bet you can't spell my name."

"I bet I can," he says. "G-e-o-r-g-e J-a-x-o-n—there now."

"Well, I didn't think you could," I says. "And you spelled it right off without studying."

It was a mighty nice family and a mighty nice house, too. It had style—no wooden latch with a buckskin string, but a brass knob to turn. No bed was in the parlor. The fireplace was big, with clean scrubbed bricks, and big brass dog-irons that could hold up a saw log. A clock was on the mantel, with a picture of a town painted on the glass. It ticked beautiful, and struck the hour—bung-ng-ng, bung-ng.

A couple of big wild-turkey fans was spread out

against the wall, and in front of them was a parrot and a cat and a dog made of china. On the table was a lovely china basket that had apples and oranges and peaches and grapes—redder and yellower and prettier than real ones, but some pieces had got chipped off. This china basket come from Philadelphia, they said. And they had some books: the Bible, and *Pilgrim's Progress*, and *Dr. Gumm's Family Medicine*, which told you what to do if a body was sick or dead. They had pictures on the walls: Washington and Lafayette and battles and Highland Mary and one picture called "Signing the Declaration." A lot of pictures made with water colors, and some they called crayons, had been painted by one of the daughters when she was fifteen years old. Then she had died. And she had made a scrapbook in which she had wrote poems and other things.

Beautiful curtains were on the windows, white, with pictures on them of castles and vines and cattle coming down to drink. And there was a little old piano that the young ladies played on. The house was a double one, with a big open place between the two houses, with a floor and a roof over all of it.

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And sometimes we ate out there. It couldn't have been better. And wasn't the cooking good, and just heaps of it too!

## CHAPTER 17

# *Why Harney Rode Away for His Hat*

Colonel Grangerford was a gentleman, well born. And being well born is worth as much in a man as in a horse. I've heard the Widow Douglas, the cream of society in our town, say it. And pap said it, and he ain't no more quality than a mudcat. The colonel was tall, and smooth-faced, with the thinnest kind of lips. He had heavy eyebrows and the darkest kind of eyes. His forehead was high and his hair was gray and straight clear down to his shoulders. Every day of his life he put on a clean shirt and a full suit made out of linen, so white it hurt your

eyes to look at it. And on Sundays he wore a blue tail coat with brass buttons on it, and carried a cane with a silver head. He was as kind as he could be—you could feel it. Sometimes he smiled, but when he straightened himself like a liberty pole, and the lightning begun to flicker from under his heavy eyebrows, you wanted to climb a tree first, and find out what the matter was afterwards. Everybody was always good-mannered where he was, and everybody loved to have him around.

When him and the old lady come down in the morning, all the family got up out of their chairs to give them good day. Then Tom and Bob went to the sideboard and mixed the bitters and handed a glass to him and to her. And then the young men bowed to them and said: "Our duty to you, sir and madam." Buck and me drank to the old people, too—just a few drops of bitters in our glasses, but mostly a little sugar and water.

Each person had their own slave to wait on them. Mine had an awful easy time, because I wasn't used to having anybody do anything for me. Buck had three more brothers once, but they all got killed.



The old gentleman owned a lot of farms and a hundred slaves. Sometimes people would come there, horseback, from miles around and stay a week and have dances and picnics. Mostly they was kinfolks.<sup>1</sup> It was a handsome lot of quality, I tell you.

Another clan around there — five or six families — was as high-toned and well bred as the Grangerfords. Their name was Shepherdson. Both used the same steamboat landing. I often saw the Shepherdsons with their fine horses there.

One day Buck and me was riding out in the woods, and we heard a horse coming. Buck yelled to jump behind some bushes. A splendid young man came

<sup>1</sup> *kinfolks*, persons of the same family — brothers, sisters, cousins, uncles, etc.



galloping down the road. It was young Harney Shepherdson. I heard Buck's gun go off at my ear, and Harney's hat tumbled off. He rode straight to the place where we was hid, but we ran. I looked over my shoulder to dodge his gun when he aimed at Buck. Twice I see him cover Buck, but he didn't shoot. Then he turned around and rode off the way he come—to get his hat, I reckon, but I couldn't see. We ran all the way home. Buck told the old gentleman. He looked pleased, then says, kind of gentle: "I don't like that shooting from behind a bush. Why didn't you step into the road, my boy?"

"The Shepherdsons don't, father. They always take advantage."



Miss Charlotte listened, and her eyes snapped, and she looked like a queen. Bob and Tom looked dark, but said nothing. Miss Sophia turned pale until she found Harney wasn't hurt. Soon as I could get Buck down by the corncrib, I says:

"Did you want to kill him, Buck?"

"Well, I bet I did."

"What did he ever do to you?"

"Him? He never done nothing to me."

✱ "Then what did you want to kill him for?"

"Why—nothing. Only it's on account of the feud."

"What's a feud?" I asks him.

"Why, where was you raised, to have to be told that! Well, I'll tell you. A feud is this way: A man has a quarrel with another man and kills him. Then the other man's brother kills *him*. Then the other brothers go for each other, and then the cousins take it up. By and by everybody gets killed off, and there ain't no more feud. But it takes a long time."

"Has this one been going on long, Buck?"

"Well, I should *reckon*! It started thirty years ago over some trouble. Then there was a lawsuit to

settle it, and the man who lost up and shot the man who won, which he would naturally do, of course. Anybody would."

"Who done the shooting first?"

"Laws, how do *I* know? I reckon pa knows."

"Has there been many killed?"

"Yes, a right smart chance of funerals. Pa's got a few buckshot in him. Bob's been cut up with a bowie knife, and Tom's been hurt once or twice."

"Has anybody been killed this year?"

"Yes, we got one and they got one. My cousin Bud was riding through the woods one day without a gun. Baldy Shepherdson was after him, his white hair flying in the wind. After five mile, Bud see he was being overtook. So he faced around to have the bullet holes in front, and the old man rode up and shot him down. But inside a week our folks laid Baldy out."

"I reckon that old man was a coward, Buck."

"I reckon not. If a body's out hunting for cowards, he don't want to fool away any time among them Shepherdsons, because they don't grow any of that kind."

Next Sunday we all went to church, everybody on horseback with guns. And the Shepherdsons all come to church, guns between their knees or standing against the wall. The preaching was about brotherly love, and everybody said it was a fine lesson. And going home they had a powerful lot to say about loving your neighbor and good works. But it was a rough Sunday for me.

After dinner everybody was laying around on the grass. And Miss Sophia motioned me to her room and shut the door very soft. She asked me if I liked her, and I said I did. Would I do something for her, then, and not tell anybody? Would I go back to church and get her Bible and fetch it to her? So I slipped off up the road and got it.

Coming back, I thought it ain't natural for a girl to be so worried about a Bible. So I give it a shake and out drops a little piece of paper. On it was wrote "half-past two." When I got home, Miss Sophia pulled me in her door and read the paper and looked glad. And before a body could think, she quick give me a squeeze and said I was the best boy in the world. Her eyes lighted up, and she looked powerful pretty.

She asked me if I read it, and I said no. Then she said the paper wasn't anything but a bookmark to keep her place, and I might go and play now.

Well, I went off down the river studying over this thing, and pretty soon I noticed my slave following me. When we was out of sight of the house, he looked back and around a second, and then comes running and says, "Master George, if you'll come down into de swamp, I'll show you a whole lot of water moccasins." That's mighty curious, thinks I, for he said the same thing yesterday. Anyway, I says, "I don't love snakes, but trot ahead."

He struck over the swamp to a little piece of land that was thick and dry, with trees and vines around. He says, "You shove right in dar just a few steps, Master George. I's seen 'em before."

I poked into the place a ways and come to a little open patch as big as a bedroom and found a man laying there and, by jings, it was Jim. I waked him up and he was so glad he nearly cried. Jim said he swum along behind me that night and heard me yell, but he didn't dare answer. He followed me but had to keep away from the dogs. He took to the woods,

and in the morning the slaves come along and found him and showed him this place to hide. And they brought him something to eat every night.

"Why didn't you fetch me here sooner, Jim?"

"Well, it wasn't no use, Huck, till we could do something. I's been patching up de raft nights."

"*What* raft, Jim?"

"Our old raft. She was tore up a good deal. But now she's all fixed up again, good as new."

"Why, Jim, how did you catch the raft?"

"How *I* going to catch her here in de woods? De friends here, dey catch her and hide her in de creek. I ask 'em if dey going to grab a white gentleman's property. Den I give 'em ten cents apiece, en dey feel rich, en dey mighty good to me. Your boy Jack is pretty smart."

"He sure is. If anything happens, *he* can say he never saw us together, and it'll be the truth."

I don't want to talk much about the next day, so I reckon I'll cut it pretty short. I waked up about dawn but didn't see nobody stirring. Buck was up and gone. Down by the woodpile I come across my Jack, and I says, "Why, what's it all about?"

"Don't you know, Master George?" he says. "Miss Sophia's run off, 'deed she has, to git married to dat Harney Shepherdson. De family found it out 'bout a half hour ago, en such a hurrying up guns and horses *you* never see! Master Saul en de boys rode up de river road to catch dat young man en kill him before he en Miss Sophia git 'cross de river."

"Buck went off without waking me up?"

"I reckon he didn't want to mix you up in it. Master Buck loaded up his gun en say he going to fetch home a Shepherdson, or bust."

I took off up the river road and could hear guns. Near where the steamboats land, I climbed up into a cottonwood. Four or five men on horses was riding around in the open place before the log store, cussing and yelling, trying to get at a couple of young men behind a woodpile. Finally one of the young men took good aim and dropped a man out of his saddle. The others jumped off and started to carry him into the store. That minute the two boys started on the run. They got to the woodpile that was in front of my tree. Then I see one of them was Buck.

Buck was awful surprised to hear my voice come



from the tree. He told me to watch sharp and let him know when the men was in sight. I wished I was out of the tree, but I didn't dare come down. Buck said that his father and two brothers were killed and two or three of the Shepherdsons. He began to cry and said that him and his cousin Joe would make up for this day yet. He said young Harney and Miss Sophia had got safe across the river. I was glad, but the way Buck took on because he didn't manage to kill Harney the day he shot at him — I never heard anything like it.

All of a sudden — bang! bang! bang! goes three or four guns. The men had slipped around and come in from behind. Both boys were hurt, but they jumped for the river and swum down the current. The men along the bank kept shooting and singing out, "Kill them! Kill them!" It made me sick, and if I told all that happened — it would make me sick again. Lots of times now I dream about Buck and the other boy.

I stayed in the tree till it was most dark. Sometimes I heard guns, and twice I saw little gangs of men gallop past the store with guns. Somehow I reckoned I was to blame, and I made up my mind I

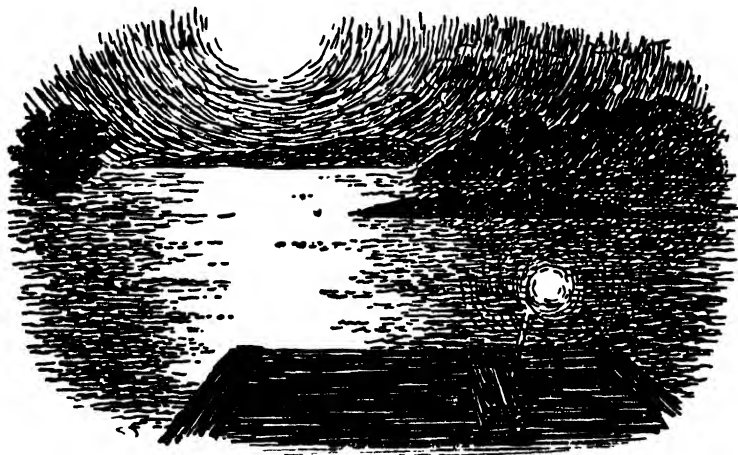
would never go near that house again. That piece of paper with "half-past two" on it must have meant that Miss Sophia was to meet Harney and run off. And I ought to 'a' told her father. Then maybe he would have locked her up, and this awful mess wouldn't have happened.

When I got down out of the tree I crept along the river bank a piece, and there I found the bodies of the two boys laying in the edge of the water. I tugged them to the bank and covered up their faces. I cried a little when I was covering up Buck's face, for he was mighty good to me. Then I got away as quick as I could.

I struck through the woods and made for the creek. But, my souls! the raft was gone! When I could get my breath, I raised a yell. A voice right near me says, "Good land! is dat you, honey? Jack reckon you's been shot, en I's waiting to shove off when he come and say you *is* dead." Nothing ever sounded so good before as Jim's voice. He grabbed me and hugged me, he was so glad to see me.

I never felt easy till the raft was two mile below there and out in the middle of the Mississippi. Then

we hung out our signal lantern and judged that we was free and safe once more. Jim got out some corn dodgers and buttermilk and pork and cabbage and greens. We ate and talked and had a good time. We were powerful glad to get away from the feud and the swamp. After all, to us there was no home like a raft. Other places were stuffy and close. You feel mighty free and easy and comfortable on a raft.



## *Royalty Comes on Our Raft*

**T**wo or three days and nights slid by, quiet and lovely. We ran nights and laid up daytimes. Each morning we cut young cottonwoods and willows to hide the raft. Then we set out fish lines, and had a swim, and waited for daylight to come. Not a sound anywhere—perfectly still, like the whole world was asleep. First we could see a dull line—that was woods. Then there was a pale place in the sky, which spread around. Next, the river softened up from a black to a gray. And last, you could see streaks in the river—rafts and boats. And you could

hear distant voices. Then the mist curled up from the water, and the east got red.

We'd take a fish off the lines and cook up a hot breakfast. Then we'd watch the lonesomeness of the river, and we'd kind of lazy along off to sleep. We'd wake up and see a steamboat coughing upstream, or see a raft sliding by, maybe a man on it chopping wood. His ax would flash and come down, but you wouldn't hear anything. You'd see the ax go up again, and by the time it was above the man's head, you'd hear the *k'chunk*. It took all that time to come over the water. Once in a thick fog the men on the rafts was beating tin pans so the steamboats wouldn't run over them. A raft went by so close we could hear the laughing and cussing, but we couldn't see any sign of the crew. It made me feel crawly, like spirits was carrying on in the air. Jim said he believed it was spirits. But I says: "No, spirits wouldn't say, 'Dern the dern fog.' "

Soon as it was night, out we shoved to the middle and floated down the current. We lit our pipes and swung our legs in the water and talked. Sometimes we'd have that whole river to ourselves for a long

time. Maybe we could see a candle in a cabin window, and sometimes a spark or two going down the river—a raft or flatboat, you know. Sometimes music from a fiddle or a song floated over from a boat. It's lovely to live on a raft. We had the sky up there all dotted with stars and we used to lay on our backs and look up at them. And we wondered if they was made or just happened. Jim said they was made, but I said they happened. I judged it would have took too long to *make* so many. Jim said the moon could have *laid* them. Well, that looked kind of reasonable, because I've seen a frog lay most as many, so of course it could be done. We used to watch the stars that fell, too. Jim said they'd got spoiled and got thrown out of the nest.

Sometimes a steamboat slipping along in the dark would throw up a whole world of sparks and they would rain down in the river awful pretty; then she would turn a corner, her lights would wink out, and the river would be still again. But a long time after she was gone, our raft would tremble.

After midnight the people on shore went to bed, and then for two or three hours the shores was black

—no more sparks in the cabin windows. These sparks was our clock. The first one that showed again meant morning was coming, so we hunted a place to hide and tie up right away.

Early one morning I found a canoe and paddled about a mile up a creek for some berries. All at once here comes a couple of men tearing up the path as fast as they could foot it. I thought I was a goner, for whenever anybody was after anybody I judged it was *me* — or maybe Jim. I was about to dig out from there in a hurry when they begged me to save their lives — said they were being chased by men and dogs. They jumped right in, and I lit out with the canoe. And then in about ten minutes we heard the men shouting. By the time we had left a mile of woods behind us, everything was quiet, and we paddled to the towhead.

One of the fellows was about seventy, with a bald head and gray whiskers. He had on an old hat and a greasy blue woolen shirt and old ragged blue trousers stuffed in his boot tops. Over his arm he carried an old long-tailed blue coat with slick brass buttons. The other fellow was about thirty, and dressed most

as bad. Both had big, fat, ratty-looking carpetbags. After breakfast we talked and the first thing that come out was that these fellows didn't know each other. "What got you into trouble?" says the bald-head to the other fellow.

"It's this way—I was selling an article to clean the teeth. It took the dirt off, but it took the enamel with it. And I stayed one night too long. Then just as I was sliding out, I run across you. You asked me to help you, and then we run across this boy. And here we are together. What's *your* game?"

"Well, I'd been running some meetings against drinking. I was the pet of the women folks, big and little, for I was making it mighty warm for the drunks, I can tell you. Business was growing all the time when somehow a little report got around last night that I had a jug on the sly. This morning I learned that people was coming in with their dogs and horses to tar and feather me and ride me on a rail.<sup>1</sup> I didn't wait for no breakfast."

<sup>1</sup> *tar and feather me and ride me on a rail.* The people planned to cover him with tar and shake feathers over him as a punishment. Then they wanted to carry him on a rail and drive him out of town.



"Old man," said the young one, "I reckon we might double-team together."

"May be. What's your line mainly?"

"Printer by trade. Do a little in medicine, theater-actor—tragedy—you know—teach singing-school. Give a talk sometimes. Oh—I do lots of things, just so it ain't work. What can *you* do?"

"I've done plenty in the doctoring way. And I can tell a pretty good fortune when I got somebody along to find out the facts for me. Preaching's my line too, and working camp meetings."

Nobody never said anything for a while. Then the young man let out a sigh and says:

"Alas!"

"What are you *alassin'* about?" says the baldhead.

"To think I should live to be leading such a life and to be lowered down to such company!"

"Blame your skin," says the baldhead, "ain't the company good enough for you?"

"Yes, it's as good as I deserve, for who fetched me so low when I was so high? *I* did myself. I don't blame anybody, gentlemen. I deserve it all. Let the cold world do its worst. There's a grave somewhere



for me. The world may take everything from me—loved ones, property, everything. But it can't take that. Sometime I'll lie down in it and my poor broken heart will be at rest." And he went on wiping his eyes.

"Why poke your poor broken heart at us?" says the old man.

"I ain't blaming you, gentlemen. I brought myself down. It's right I should suffer, perfectly right."

"Where was you brought down from?" asks the baldhead.

"Ah, the world never believes me," says the young

man, very solemn. "But I feel I can trust you. By rights, gentlemen, I am a duke."

Jim's eyes bugged out when he heard that, and I reckon mine did, too. Then the old man says, "No, you can't mean it?"

"Yes. My great-grandfather, oldest son of the Duke of Bridgewater, fled to this country to breathe the pure air of freedom. And here I am, the rightful Duke of Bridgewater, torn from my high place, laughed at by the cold world and brought down to the level of such companions on a raft!"

We tried to comfort him, but he said it was no use. He thought it might help him some if we addressed him as "Your Grace," or "My Lord," or "Your Lordship." And we might call him by his title, "Bridgewater," and could wait on him at dinner and do little things for him. At dinner Jim would say, "Will your Grace have some more of dis or dat?" And a body could see it was mighty pleasing to the duke.

But now with the duke getting all the petting, by and by the old man got pretty silent. He seemed to have something on his mind. So in the afternoon, he

says: "Looky here, Bilgewater, you ain't the only person that's had troubles and been brought down wrongfully out of a high place. You ain't the only person that's had a secret of his birth." And he begins to cry, and says: "Bilgewater, can I trust you?"

"To the bitter death," says the duke, squeezing the old man's hand.

"Well, then, this minute you're looking at the poor disappeared Dolphin,<sup>2</sup> Louie the Seventeen."

"At your age?" says the duke. "You must be six or seven hundred years old"

"Bilgewater, don't joke. Trouble brought these gray hairs and this baldness. But, gentlemen, before you is the wandering and suffering rightful King of France."

Well, he cried and took on so that me and Jim didn't know hardly what to do. We was so sorry and so glad and proud we'd got him with us, too. So we set in to comfort *him*. But he said that nothing but to be dead and done with it all could do him any good. Then he said it often made him feel easier

<sup>2</sup> *Dolphin*, a large fish. The old man meant *Dauphin*, the oldest son of the King of France.

if people treated him according to his rights and kneeled down to speak to him. So Jim and me set out to majestyng and waiting on him first at meals and standing up till he told us to set down. This done him heaps of good. But the duke didn't look a bit satisfied. Still, the king acted real friendly, and said the duke's great-grandfather and all the other Dukes of Bilgewater was a good deal thought of by *his* father, and was allowed to come to the palace considerable. But the duke stayed mad a good while, till by and by the king says:

"Like as not we got to be together a blamed long time on this raft, Bilgewater. It ain't my fault I wasn't born a duke, nor yours you wasn't born a king. Make the best of things. This life ain't so bad — plenty of eats and nothing to do. Give us your hand and leave us be friends."

And they shook, and Jim and me was pretty glad, for what you want, above all things, on a raft, is for everybody to be satisfied and feel right and kind toward the others.

It didn't take me long to make up my mind that these two wasn't no kings nor dukes at all, but just

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low-down quacks. But I kept it to myself. That's the best way, for then you don't get into no trouble. We would call them kings and dukes long as it would keep peace in the family. I didn't tell Jim, for it wouldn't do him any good to know they weren't real. I had learned this from my pap: the best way to get along with these kind of people is to let them have their own way.

## CHAPTER 19

# *What Royalty Did to Parkville*

Our visitors asked us a lot of questions: why we covered up the raft? why we laid by in the daytime? and was Jim a runaway slave?

“Goodness sakes! Would a runaway slave head *south*?” I says, for I had to make up something quick. “My folks was living in Pike County, Missouri, and all died but me and pa and my brother Ike. All pa had left when he squared up was sixteen dollars and Jim. He caught this raft one day and reckoned we could go on it to my Uncle Ben’s below New Orleans. But pa’s luck didn’t hold out. A steamboat run

over us, and pa and Ike, who was only four years old, was both drowned. Jim and me kept on, but people was always coming to take him off as a run-away slave. So now we don't run daytimes."

"Leave me alone," the duke says, "to figure out a way to run daytimes. We'll get past this town first."

They looked in our wigwam at our beds. Mine was a straw, and Jim's was a cornhusk with corncobs to hurt you. The duke wanted my bed, but because of the difference in rank he saw it was no use against the king, and he says: "My once proud spirit has been broke. I am alone in the world—let me suffer. The king shall have the straw tick."

When it got dark, the king said to stand well out toward the middle of the river and not to show any lights till we got below this town. About ten o'clock it began to rain and blow and thunder like everything. The king and duke crawled into the wigwam and left us to watch.

You don't see such a storm as that every day in the week. How the wind did scream along! And every second or two a flash lit up the whitecaps for a half mile around and the islands looked dusty.



Then would come a crash! — bum! bum! bumble-umble-um—and the thunder would go rumbling away. And then *rip* comes another flash, and light from the lightning made it clear enough to steer by.

I had the middle watch<sup>1</sup> and was pretty sleepy, so Jim said he would stand the first half of it for me. He was always mighty good that way, Jim was. I crawled into the wigwam, but the king and the duke had their legs stretched out, so I had to lay outside in the rain. I didn't mind, for it was a warm rain. But the waves got higher so that a big wave washed me right overboard, and Jim nearly died laughing. Early in the morning we slid the raft into hiding quarters.

After breakfast the king got out an old deck of cards, and him and the duke played seven-up, five cents a game. Then they started to lay out a plan. The duke fetched a lot of little printed bills out of his carpetbag. In one, he was "a celebrated doctor from Paris" who would give talks and "read your character at twenty-five cents apiece." In another bill he was "a great Shakespearean actor of London."

<sup>1</sup>*middle-watch*. The 12 hours were divided into 3 watches, 6-10, 10-2, and 2-6.

He could tell the future and break witch spells and so on.

He says to the king, "Did you ever tread the stage, Royalty?" And when the king says no, the duke says "We'll hire a hall and do the sword fight in 'Richard III,' and a scene from 'Romeo and Juliet.' How does that strike you?"

"I'm in on anything that will pay, Bilgewater. But I don't know nothing about play acting. When pap used to have shows at the palace, I was too small. Do you reckon you can learn me?"

"You can be Juliet, for I'm used to being Romeo. Juliet's a young girl."

"But, duke, my peeled head and white whiskers is going to look uncommon odd on her."

"Don't worry," says the duke. "These country clowns won't ever think of that. And besides, you'll be in her clothes. Juliet is on the balcony in the moonlight, with her lace nightgown and night-cap on."

Then the duke got out some old stage clothes. And he got out his book and read the parts over in the most splendid spread-eagle way, dancing around and

acting proud. After dinner<sup>2</sup> the duke allowed he would go down to a little one-horse town about three mile below the bend. And the king wanted to go, and Jim says I better go too and get some coffee. Well, the people in town had all gone to a camp meeting about two mile back in the woods. The duke found a printing office over a carpenter shop, and in it was pictures of horses and runaway slaves. Nobody was there and the place was unlocked, so the duke wanted to stay. But the king and me struck out for the camp meeting.

<sup>2</sup> *dinner*. Dinner in Huck's time was eaten at noon.



It was an awful hot day. The woods was full of teams and wagons, hitched everywhere. Lemonade and gingerbread was being sold in open sheds roofed over with branches. And there was piles of water-melons and green corn and suchlike truck.

Preaching was going on under the same kinds of sheds. The people sat on benches made of logs, with holes bored in for legs. The women had on sun-bonnets and calico dresses. There were barefooted folks, and old women knitting, and young folks courting. The preacher would read out two lines of a song, and then everybody would sing it in a grand



way. They sung louder and louder, and toward the end they begun to moan and shout. Then the preacher started shouting as loud as he could and went waving his body up and down with his arms going all the time. He would spread the Bible open and pass it around in the air, shouting:

“It’s the serpent in the wilderness! Look upon it and live!” And the people would shout, “Glory! — A-a-men!” And they went on moaning and crying and shouting “A-a-men!” By and by you couldn’t make out what the preacher was saying because of so much noise. Folks worked their way to the front benches, shouting just crazy and wild.

Well, the first I knowed, the king got a-going, and you could hear him above everybody. He charged up onto the stage, and the preacher begged him to speak. The king told him he was a pirate out in the Indian Ocean for thirty years, and he was home to take out some fresh men, for his men had been killed in a fight. But now, thanks to goodness, he’d been robbed last night and put off a steamboat without a cent. And he was glad of it, for now he was a changed man and happy for the first time in his life. And he

was going right back into the Indian Ocean to turn the pirate crews there into the true path. And being acquainted with all of them there in that ocean, he could do it. And though it would take him a long time without money, he would get there. And every time he saved a pirate, he would say, "Don't thank me. It all belongs to them dear people in Pokeville camp meeting and that dear preacher, the truest friend a pirate ever had."

So the king went all through the crowd with his hat for them to drop money into. He wiped his eyes and blessed the people for being so good to the poor pirates. And some of the girls asked him to kiss them to remember him by, and some of them he hugged and kissed five or six times. They wanted him to stay a week and live in their houses. But he said he couldn't hardly wait to get to the Indian Ocean to work on the pirates.

Back at the raft the king counted \$87 that he had collected. The king said, take it all around, heathens don't amount to shucks alongside of pirates to work a camp meeting with.

In the printing office the duke had printed two

little jobs for farmers, and got some money for some advertising. He'd took in \$9.50. And he showed us a bill he'd printed, with a picture of a runaway slave with a bundle over his shoulder, and "\$200 reward" under it. The reading was all about Jim and just described him to a dot. It said he had run away from below New Orleans.

"Now," says the duke, "we can run in the daytime if we want to, for we can tie Jim and say we captured him and are taking him down to collect our reward."

We all said the duke was pretty smart. We wanted to make miles enough that night to get away from the people in this town. So we laid low till ten o'clock and then shoved out, going pretty wide out by the town. When Jim called me at four in the morning to take the watch, he says:

"Huck, does you reckon we's going to run across any more kings on dis trip?"

"No," I says, "I reckon not."

"Well, I don't mind one or two, but dat's enough. Dis one's powerful drunk, en de duke ain't much better."

## CHAPTER 20

# *The Best Circus I Ever Saw*

**A**fter breakfast the king smoked his pipe and started learning his “Romeo and Juliet.” The duke had to show him over and over again how to say every speech. And he made him sigh and put his hand over his heart. And after a while he says, “Pretty good, only don’t bellow out ‘Romeo’ like a bull. You must say it soft and sick. Just remember that Juliet is a dear child of a girl.”

Then they made swords out of wood and practiced until the king tripped and fell in the water. Then they sat down to talk about all kinds of adventures.



And the duke says, "This must be a first-class show. I'll do the Highland fling or sailor's hornpipe, and you can do Hamlet's speech, 'To be or not to be, that is the question'—the most celebrated thing in Shakespeare. Always gets the house. I'll walk up and down a few minutes and see if I can remember it."

Then the duke would lift his eyebrows and press his hand on his forehead and walk back and forth and sigh and moan. It was beautiful to see him. By and by he got it. Then he takes a noble stand with one leg shoved forward and his arms stretched way out, and his head thrown back and looking up at the sky. All through his speech he roared and spread around and swelled out his chest, it being the best acting I ever saw. The king liked it and could soon do it first rate.

The first chance we got the duke had some show bills printed. After that for two or three days we floated along and the raft was a most lively place. They was sword-fighting and studying over their parts all the time.

One morning going down past the state of Arkansas, we tied up above a little one-horse town. All but

Jim went down to see about giving a show. We struck it mighty lucky. There was going to be a circus there that afternoon and the country people was already beginning to come in. The duke hired the courthouse, and we stuck up our bills. These told about their being in Paris three hundred nights, and playing in London, and having to go soon and ~~fill~~ more dates in Europe.

The stores and houses around were mostly poor old shacks that had never been painted. They were set up on posts three or four feet above the ground so as to be above high water when the river was up. Little gardens had sunflowers and weeds and curled-up boots and bottles. The fences were crooked and leaning, with broken gates, some hanging on one leather strap. They looked whitewashed and old.

All the stores stood along one street, with country people hitching their horses out in front. Dry-goods boxes was piled in the shade, and loafers was roosting on them chewing tobacco. They talked crazylike and used a lot of cuss words. On the river front some of the houses looked about ready to tumble down. Sometimes a town had to be always moving back,

and back, because the river washed away the bank. The nearer it got to noon that day the thicker and thicker was the wagons and horses in the streets, and more coming to go to the circus. Families fetched their dinners with them and set in their wagons to eat. A lot was drinking whiskey, and I saw three fights.

Then I went to the circus and fooled around the back till the watchman went by, and then I crawled under the tent. I had my twenty-dollar gold piece, but I reckoned I better save it, because there ain't no telling how soon you are going to need it, away from home and among strangers that way. You can't be too careful. I ain't against spending money on circuses when there ain't no other way, but there ain't no use in *wasting* it on them.

It was a real fine circus. It was the splendidest sight that ever was when they all come riding in, two by two. Gentlemen and ladies rode side by side, resting their hands on their hips easy and comfortable. All the ladies was perfectly beautiful, and looked like real sure-enough queens, and dressed in clothes that cost millions of dollars. And just all covered with

diamonds! I never see anything so lovely. Then one by one they got up and stood on their horses' backs and went galloping around the ring all wavy and graceful, every lady's dress flapping soft and silky.

Faster and faster they went, all of them dancing, first one foot in the air and then the other, the horses leaning more and more. The ringmaster going around and around the center pole, cracking his long whip in the air, and shouting "Hi—hi!" And the clown cracking jokes behind him.

By and by every lady put her hands on her hips and every gentleman folded his arms, and then how the horses did lean over and hump themselves. Then they made the sweetest bows and rode out of the ring, and everybody went just about wild.



And all the time that clown carried on so it most killed the people. The ringmaster couldn't ever say a word to him but he was back at him quick as a wink with the funniest things a body ever said. And how he ever *could* think of so many of them, and so sudden and sure, was what I couldn't no way understand. Why, I couldn't have thought of them in a year. And by and by a drunk man tried to get into the ring for a ride on one of the horses. He said he could ride as well as anybody that ever was. They tried to keep him out, but he wouldn't listen and the whole show come to a standstill. Then the people begun to make fun of him and that made him mad, and he begun to rip and tear. That stirred up the people and a lot of men begun to swarm toward the ring, saying, "Knock him down! throw him out!" Then the ringmaster made a little speech, and said he hoped they would all be orderly. And if the man would promise he wouldn't make no more trouble, he would let him ride if he thought he could stay on the horse.

The minute he was on, the horse begun to rip and tear and jump around, with two circus men hanging on and trying to hold him and the drunk man hugging

the horse's neck, and his heels flying in the air every jump. The whole crowd stood up and shouted and laughed till the tears rolled down. And at last, sure enough, the horse broke loose. And away he went round and round the ring. The drunk man hung onto his neck, with first one leg dragging on the ground, then the other. It wasn't funny to me. I was all of a tremble to see the danger this man was in.

But pretty soon he struggled up on the horse, swaying this way and that. And the next minute he springs up and then he stood! And the horse a-going like a house afire, too! He just stood up there, a-sailing around as easy and comfortable as if he wasn't ever drunk in his life. And then he begun to pull off his clothes and throw them. He shed them so thick they filled the air. Altogether he shed seventeen suits. And then there he was, slim and handsome, and dressed the finest you ever saw. And he lit into that horse with his whip and made him fairly dance. He finally made his bow and skipped off to the dressing room, and everybody just a-howling and laughing.

Then the ringmaster see how he had been fooled, and he *was* the sickest ringmaster you ever see, I

reckon. Why, it was one of his own men who had got up that joke all out of his own head and never let on! Well, I felt sheepish enough to be took in so, but I wouldn't have been in that ringmaster's place for a thousand dollars. I don't know. There may be better circuses than what that one was, but I never struck them yet.

Well, that night we had our show, but only about twelve people come. They kept laughing all the time, and it made the duke mad. He said that these Arkansaw fools didn't know good acting, for they never saw it before. What they wanted was something funny and low-down. So he fixed up some bills on sheets of wrapping paper, and the next day we put them up. And on the bottom of the bills, it says:

**LADIES AND CHILDREN NOT ADMITTED**

"There," says the duke, "if that line don't fetch them, I don't know Arkansaw."

## CHAPTER 21

# *Too Much Royalty for Jim*

Well, all day him and the king worked building a stage and curtain, and that night the house was full of men in no time. The duke come out onto the stage and made a bow and said that this was the most thrilling play-acting ever seen. Then when he got them all open-eyed, the king comes trotting out on all fours without any clothes on. He was painted all over with rings and striped, all the colors of the rainbow. It was just wild and funny, and the people most killed themselves laughing. They roared and cheered till the king come back and did it all



over again. Well, it would make a cow laugh to see the shines that old fool cut.

Then the duke let the curtain down and said the play would be performed only two nights more, because seats were already sold in London for this same show. And he said that if he had pleased them, would they tell their friends about it? The people sang out, "What, is it all over? Is that all?" And when the duke said yes, everybody sings out "Sold!" and rose up angry.

But a fine-looking man got up on a bench and says that they don't want to be the laughingstock of the town. So why not talk the show up and sell the *rest* of the town? And everybody says, "The judge is right! Tell everybody how good it was and to come and see the great tragedy."

Next day you couldn't hear nothing around that town but how splendid that show was. The house was packed again that night. And when we got back, the duke and king made Jim and me hide the raft about two mile below the town.

The third night the house was full again, but with the same people that had been at the show the other

two nights. Every man that went in had things in his pockets: sickly eggs, old vegetables, and such things. And if I know the signs of a dead cat being around, and I bet I do, there was sixty-four of them went in. Well, when the place couldn't hold any more people, the duke give a fellow a quarter to watch the door, while he started the show. Him and me went around toward the stage door, and he says in a low voice: "Walk fast till we get away from the houses, then run for the raft as fast as you can."

Well, away we heeled it in the dark. We struck the raft, and in two seconds we was shooting downstream, all dark and still. I reckoned the poor king was in for a time with that crowd, but nothing of the kind. Pretty soon he crawls out from right under the wigwam, and says, "Bilgey, how'd the old thing pan out this time?" He hadn't even been up town. Then the two fairly laughed their bones loose, and called the people greenhorns.<sup>1</sup> The duke said it worked out three nights just as he thought. Them rascals took in four hundred and sixty-five dollars in three nights.

<sup>1</sup> *greenhorn*, a simple person without experience who believes everything that he is told.

I never see money pulled in by the wagonload like that before.

When they got to sleep and snoring, Jim says, "Don't it 'sprise you de way dem kings carries on, Huck?"

"Well, most kings are like that," I says, "as far as I can make out."

"These two kings of ours is all I can stand. I sure don't want no more."

There was no use to tell Jim that these wasn't real kings and dukes.

So I went to sleep, and Jim didn't call me when it was my turn to watch. I waked up when it was getting light, and there was Jim with his head between his knees, moaning to himself, thinking about his wife and children. He was low and homesick because he hadn't ever been away from home before in his life. I do believe he cared just as much for his people as white folks do for theirs. It don't seem natural, but I guess it's so.

## *The King Turns Preacher*

NEXT day toward night we laid up where there was a village on each side of the river. The duke and the king begun to lay out a plan for working these towns. Jim said he hoped it wouldn't take long, because it was mighty tiresome being tied up all day with a rope. So then the duke put a gown and white horsehair whiskers on Jim. He took his paint and made Jim's face and hands a dead, dull solid blue. Blamed if he wasn't the horriblemest-looking sight I ever see. Then the duke wrote on a shingle and put it in front of the wigwam:



Jim said that would be better than being tied a couple of hours every day. The duke told him to make himself free and easy. And he said if anybody come around, Jim must hop out of the wigwam and howl like a wild beast, and then they'd probably leave him alone. Which was sound enough judgment. But any man with common sense wouldn't wait for him to howl. Why, he didn't only look like he was dead, he looked considerable more than that.

They didn't care to try the play-acting, which they called "The Royal Nonesuch," plan again, for they reckoned the news maybe had come down the river. The duke said he would lay off and work his brains to plan something. And the king would drop over to one of the villages and take a look around. We had all bought some new store clothes. When the king took off his tall white hat, and bowed and smiled, he looked grand and religious.

About three mile above town was a steamboat taking on a load. The king said he would catch the boat and make believe we had come down to the town from St. Louis or Cincinnati. I shot the canoe along near the shore. Then pretty soon we come to a nice, simple-looking country fellow with a couple of big carpetbags by him. We run the boat to shore and the king says, "Where you bound for, young man?"

"For the steamboat going to New Orleans."

"Git aboard," says the king. "My servant will help you with your bags. Help the gentleman, Adolphus," meaning me.

The young man seemed mighty thankful. He

asked the king where he was going. The king said he had landed in the other village and was now going to visit a friend on a farm about a mile up. Then the young fellow says, "When I first see you, I says it's Mr. Wilks, sure. Then I reckoned he wouldn't be paddling up the river. You ain't him."

"No, my name's Blodgett—Reverend Elexander Blodgett—one of the Lord's poor servants. But I'm sorry for Mr. Wilks—if he's missed anything."

"Well, he don't miss any property by it, because he'll get that all right. But he's missed seeing his brother Pete die. His brother never talked about anything else all these three weeks. He hadn't seen Harvey since they were boys, and hadn't ever seen his brother William, the deaf and dumb one. Peter and George were the only ones to ever come out here. George and his wife died last year. Harvey and William is the only ones left, and they ain't here."

"Did anybody send them word?"

"Oh, yes, a month or two ago when Pete thought he wasn't going to get well. You see, George's girls were too young to be much company for him, except Mary Jane, the redheaded one. He left a letter

for Harvey to tell where his money was hid and how the property was to be divided up."

"Where does Harvey live?"

"Oh, he lives in Sheffield, England. Preaches there. Never been in this country. He might not 'a' got the letter, you know."

"Too bad he couldn't 'a' lived to see his brother, poor soul," says the king sadly. "You going to New Orleans, you say?"

"Yes, and next Wednesday I'm going to take a ship for South America, where my uncle lives."

"A lovely journey. I wish I was going. Is Mary Jane the oldest? How old is the others?"

"Mary Jane's nineteen, Susan's fifteen, and Joanna's about fourteen—she's the religious one."

"Poor things! to be left alone in the cold world."

"Well, they could be worse off. Old Peter had friends who ain't going to let them come to no harm. There's Hobson—the preacher, Deacon Hovey, Levi Bell—the lawyer, Doctor Robinson, and their wives, and the Widow Bartley, and—a lot more. Peter used to write home about them, so Harvey'll know where to look for friends when he gets here."



Well, the king kept asking questions about everybody and everything in that whole town, and all about the Wilkses and about Peter's business, which was tanning hides, and about George's business, building houses, and so on and so on. Then the king asks why he wants to walk all the way up to the steamboat. And the country fellow says, "She's a big New Orleans boat, and she might not stop here. Sometimes they won't stop when you hail them."

"Was Peter Wilks well off?" asked the king.

"Pretty well off. He had houses and land and three or four thousand dollars in cash hid somewhere."

"When did you say he died?"

"I didn't say, but it was last night."

"Funeral tomorrow, likely?"

"Yes, about the middle of the day."

"Well, it's all terribly sad, but we've all got to go sometime, and we want to be prepared."

"Yes, ma always used to say that."

When we struck the boat, the king forgot all about going aboard. And he says for me to hurry back and fetch the duke. I see what *he* was up to, but I never said nothing. When I got back with the

duke, the king told him everything the young fellow had said—every last word of it. And all the time he was trying to talk like an Englishman. Then he says, “How are you on the deaf and dumb, Bilgewater?”

The duke said he had played a deaf and dumb person on the stage. So then they waited for another big steamboat, and they hailed her. She sent a small boat ashore and took us on board. But when the captain knew we only wanted to ride three or four miles, he cussed for fair. Then the king says, “If gentlemen can pay a dollar a mile to be took on, ain’t the steamboat willing to take them?”

So they softened down. And when we got to the village, the captain sent a rowboat to take us ashore. And about two dozen men flocked down when they saw the boat coming. The king says, “Can any of you gentlemen tell me where Mr. Peter Wilks lives?” They looked at one another and nodded their heads as much as to say, “What did I tell you?” Then one of them says, soft and gentle, “I’m sorry, sir, but we can only tell you where he *did* live yesterday evening.”

Then all of a sudden the king put his head on the

man's shoulder and cried down his back, and he says: "Ah me, our poor brother gone — gone, and we never got to see him. Oh, it's too, too hard!"

Then while he's weeping, he turns around and makes a lot of fool signs on his hands to the duke. And the duke dropped his carpetbag and broke out crying. Well, the men gathered around and said all sorts of kind things and carried our carpetbags up the hill, while the king and duke leaned on them crying. They told the king all about the brother's last moments, and the king told it on his hands to the duke, and both of them boo-hooed and cried, and cried. It was enough to make a body ashamed of the human race.

## CHAPTER 23

### *All Full of Tears*

**T**he news spread all over town in two minutes, and folks come running from their houses to join us. Pretty soon we was in the middle of a crowd, and the noise of the tramping was like soldiers marching. Somebody would say, "Is it them?" and somebody trotting with the gang would answer back, "You bet it is."

When we got there, the street was full of people, and the three girls was standing in the door. Mary Jane was redheaded and most awful beautiful, and her face and eyes were lit up like glory. The girls jumped into the arms of the king and duke, and they kissed the girls a lot, and everybody cried.

Then the king saw the coffin on two chairs in the corner, and the two men walked over there slow and sadlike. The others dropped back with a "Sh!" and the men took their hats off. One look in the coffin and the two began howling and taking on awful. They put their arms around each other's necks and boo-hooed loud. And everybody cried again. Then the king got on one side of the coffin and the duke on the other. They kneeled down and rested their foreheads on the coffin like they was praying. Then the women kissed the girls and went out sobbing and looking sad.

Now the king comes forward and makes a speech, all full of tears and wish-wash about what a sore trial for him and his poor brother to lose the diseased,<sup>1</sup> after coming the whole four thousand miles. He's thankful for the holy tears of these dear friends. But words are too weak, he says, to paint his and his brother's feelings. Then he says "Amen!" and busts out crying again.

Then somebody in the crowd started a song and

<sup>1</sup> *diseased*. The king uses the wrong word. He means *the deceased* — the one dead.

it made me feel like church letting out. Music is a good thing. And after all that soul-butter and hogwash,<sup>2</sup> it sounded good and honest. Then the king says some of the friends must set up with the diseased. And if his brother could speak, he knows whose names would be dear to him. And then the king gives the names of the people he had learned, saying that his dear brother Peter had wrote about them. Then they all shook hands with the king, smiling and bobbing their heads, while William made signs with his hands and goo-gooed like a baby.

Then Mary Jane fetched the letter her father had left behind, and the king read it and cried. Three thousand dollars was going to Harvey and William. And it told where six thousand dollars more was hid. So the two said they'd get the money from the cellar and have everything square. And they told me to bring the candle. Well, they found the bag and poured the money out on the floor, and it was a lovely sight, all them gold pieces. How the king's eyes did shine! He slapped the duke on the shoulder

<sup>2</sup> *soul-butter and hogwash*. Huck means the king and the duke's false tears.



and says, "Why, Biljy, this beats the 'Nonesuch,' don't it—being brothers to a rich dead man?"

Then they let the gold pieces run down between their fingers and jingle onto the floor. It was all theirs, but they had to count it, and it came out \$415 short. So they worried about that. And the duke says, "Let it go. We can spare it."

"Course we can *spare* it," says the king, "but it's the count. We want to be square and open. And when we take it up and count it before them people, there must be six thousand dollars—"

"Hold on," says the duke. "Let's make up the difference."

"Amazing idea," says the king. "Blest if the old 'Nonesuch' money ain't helping us out."

"And I got another idea," says the duke. "Let's take it upstairs, count it, and give it to the girls."

"Lovely idea," says the king. "Now they'll *know* we're square."

When it was all counted and stacked in twenty piles, three hundred dollars each, folks were looking hungry at it. Then the king swelled up for another speech:



“Friends all: my poor brother that lies yonder has been generous to these poor little fatherless and motherless lambs. We know he’d ’a’ been more generous if he hadn’t been afraid of wounding his dear William and me. Now, *wouldn’t* he? But what kind of uncles would it be that would rob such poor sweet lambs at such a time? Well, if I know William—and I think I do—I’ll just ask him.” Then he turned to William the duke and made signs. The duke looked stupid at first, then he hugged the king. And the king says, “I knowed how he’d feel. Here, Mary Jane, Susan, Joanner, take the money—take it *all*. It’s a gift of him that lays yonder, cold but joyful.”

Well, all three girls went for the king and duke, hugging and kissing them. And the folks come forward and shook the hands of the deadbeats, and says: “You dear good souls! how lovely! how could you?”

Then the king invites them all to the funeral, which was going to be public. And all the time he was trying to talk like he come from England. Just then a big iron-jawed man stepped forward and laughed right in his face. Everybody was shocked and says, “Why, doctor!”

"Is it my poor brother's dear good friend—Doc-  
tor Robinson?" says the king, smiling eager and shov-  
ing out his hand.

"Keep your hands off me," says the doctor. "You  
talk like an Englishman, *don't* you? *You* Pete Wilks'  
brother! You're humbugs,<sup>a</sup> that's what you are!" *Q. E. D.*

The crowd tried to quiet the doctor. And they  
begged him not to hurt the feelings of these two  
brothers and the girls. But it didn't do no good. The  
doctor kept calling them humbugs and liars. The  
poor girls hung onto the king, crying and taking on.  
Then the doctor turned to them sudden and says:

"I am your friend, and want to protect you. This  
man has come here with a lot of empty names he's  
picked up somewhere, and you take them for *proofs*.  
Mary Jane Wilks, you know I am your friend. Turn  
these pitiful deadbeats out—I beg you to do it. Will  
you?"

"*Here* is my answer!" she says, and she shoves the  
bag of money into the king's hands. "Take this six  
thousand dollars and put it out to interest for me and  
my sisters. We'll trust you."

<sup>a</sup> *humbug*, a person who cheats or lies.

Then the folks clapped their hands like a perfect storm, and the king held up his head and smiled. Then the doctor says:

“All right, I wash my hands of the whole matter. But I warn you all, you’re going to feel *sick* about this sometime.”

“All right, doctor,” says the king, mocking him. “If they’re sick, we’ll try and get them to send for you.” Then everybody laughed.

## CHAPTER 24

# *I Steal the King's Money*

Well, Mary Jane give the spare room to Uncle William, and her room to Uncle Harvey. And up in the attic was a place for me—small, but good enough. That night at the big supper, I stood behind the king's and the duke's chairs and waited on them. And the servants waited on the rest. Mary Jane set at the head of the table, and Susan alongside of her, both saying how the biscuits was bad and the fried chicken was tough—the way women do to make folks say nice things. And the other women said, “How do you get biscuits so

brown and light?" and "This chicken just melts in your mouth!" and all that kind of thin talky-talk.

And when they were through with their supper, Joanna and me ate in the kitchen while the servants cleaned up things. So she begun to question me about England and blessed if I didn't think the ice was getting mighty thin sometimes. She says, "Did you ever see the king?"

"Who? William Fourth? Why, he goes to our church." I knowed that he died years ago, but I never let on. "His seat is right opposite ours."

"I thought he lived in London, and you live in Sheffield."

"Well, in the summertime," I says quick, "he comes to Sheffield to take sea baths."

"Why, how you talk. Sheffield ain't on the sea. How could he get sea baths?"

"But—they bring the sea water to Sheffield and heat it in big ovens."

"That's a funny way to do. Do you go to church?"

"Of course—regular."

"Whose seat do you sit in?"

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"Why, ours — your Uncle Harvey's."

"What does he want with a regular seat? — he's the preacher."

I'd forgot that he was the preacher, and I had to do some quick thinking. And so I says, "Do you suppose there's only one preacher to a church?"

"Why do they want more than one?"

"What! — to preach before a king? I never did see such a girl as you. They have about seventeen."

"Seventeen! my land, I wouldn't set and listen to such a string as that, not if I *never* got to glory."

"But they don't all preach the same day. They're mostly for *style*."

"Seems like foolishness. How are the servants treated in England? Better than here?"

"No, a servant is nobody there."

"Do servants have their holidays? — Christmas and Fourth of July?"

"Oh, listen! — a body could tell you didn't know much about England to ask that. Why, servants never go to a circus nor to church."

"But you said *you* always went to church."

Well, I quick tried to tell her I was not a common

kind of servant. And she says, "Honest Injun, now, ain't you been telling me a lot of lies?"

Just then Mary Jane and Susan walked in, and Mary Jane says, "Why, Joanna. It's neither right nor kind to talk to a stranger like that, and him so far away from his people."

"You're always trying to help someone, Mary Jane," says Joanna, "before they're hurt. I reckon he's told me some stretchers, and I won't swallow it all."

"He's here in our house. You'd feel ashamed, wouldn't you, in his place?"

"Well, Mary Jane, he said —"

"It makes no difference what he *said*. The thing is you should treat him kind."

And I says to myself, *this* is a girl I'm letting that old pirate rob her of her money. Then Susan puts in and scolded Joanna, too. And I says to myself that this is *another* one that I'm letting them rob her of her money. And then Joanna asked my pardon, and she did it so beautiful that I wished I could tell her a thousand lies so she could ask my pardon again. I felt low-down and mean because I was letting them get

robbed. And I says to myself: "My mind's made up — I'll get that money back for them or bust."

So I got to thinking should I tell the doctor, or go to Mary Jane in private, or tell the other folks, or what? I knowed somehow I had to steal the money and not let these deadbeats get it away from the girls. So I went up to search the king's room. Just as I begun to paw around, I heard them coming. I was going to slide under the bed, but just then my hand touched the curtain that hid Mary Jane's clothes. I jumped behind that and snuggled in against the gowns. And lucky for me, for the first thing the duke done was to get down and look under the bed. Then the king says, "Well, cut it short, for it's better for us to be down there a-whooping up the mourning than up here giving them a chance to talk us over."

"I ain't easy about that doctor. I think we better slip down the river with the six thousand dollars."

"And not sell out the rest of the property?" says the king. "Leave eight or nine thousand dollars' worth of property just suffering to be shoveled up?"

The duke said the bag of gold was enough and he didn't want to rob these young girls of everything.



"Why, how you talk!" says the king. "We're only robbing them of this money. The people that *buys* the property is the losers, because as soon as it's found out that we didn't own it, the sale won't be lawful. These girls will get their house back again, and that's enough for *them*. They're young and lively and can easy earn a living." Well, the king talked him blind and at last the duke gave in. But he said he didn't like the doctor hanging around. And the king says, "What do we care for him? We got all the fools in town on our side."

Then the duke said all right, but he didn't think they had put the money in a good place. That cheered me up, for now I'd get an idea to help me find it. And the duke says that Mary Jane will ask her servant to box these old clothes up. And the servant will find the money.

So the king comes feeling under the curtain three or four feet from where I was. But I stuck tight to the wall and tried to think what I'd do if they caught me. The king got the bag and never knowed I was around. And from their talk I knowed they was hiding it in the featherbed.

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Before they was halfway downstairs I had it. I felt my way in the dark to my own room, and I had that six thousand dollars. I knew they'd hunt through the whole house, and I judged I'd better hide it outside. By and by, when I heard the duke and king come up, I waited and listened to see if anything would happen. Then when all the late sounds had quit and the early ones hadn't begun yet, I slipped down the ladder with the bag of gold in my hands.

## CHAPTER 25

### *Dead Peter Has His Gold*

I crept to their doors and listened. They was snoring, so I tiptoed downstairs. Through a crack of the dining-room door, I could see the men who was watching the coffin. There was a candle in both rooms. Just then I heard somebody coming down the stairs. I took a swift look around and then run into the parlor. The only place I see to hide the money was in the coffin. The lid was shoved along about a foot, and a wet cloth was over the dead man's face. I tucked the money bag under the lid, just below where his hands was crossed. I felt creepy, but I slipped quietly across the room and hid behind the door.



It was Mary Jane. She went to her uncle's coffin, real soft, and knelt down and begun to cry to herself. I slid by the dining-room door and slipped up to bed, feeling kind of blue. And I says that when we get down the river a hundred miles, I can write back to Mary Jane. But then I thought, what if they find the money when they screw the lid on? Then the king will get it back. Of course I *wanted* to slide down and get it out of there, but I didn't dare try. Every minute it was getting earlier now, and I might get caught — caught with six thousand dollars in my hands that nobody hadn't hired me to take care of.

About noon the undertaker come with his men.

They set the chairs up in rows and borrowed more from the neighbors. Then the people begun to flock in, and the girls took seats in the front row. Folks would go by the coffin and look down at the dead man's face all very still and solemn. The undertaker, with his black gloves on, would slip around moving people and squeezing in late ones, motioning them with his hands. He just moved around soft, without a smile.

The funeral sermon was long, and the king was nervous. When it was all over and the undertaker begun to move toward the coffin, I watched him. But he just slid the lid along and screwed it down tight. I didn't know whether the money was in there or not. Then how could I write back to Mary Jane about it? Suppose they dug Peter up and didn't find it? I'd get put in prison. I better not write at all. Trying to better things, I'd worsened them a hundred times. I watched the faces while he was being buried, and afterwards, but they didn't tell me anything.

The king visited around that evening and sweetened folks up and gave out the idea that his church in England wanted him back. He was sorry to hurry.

Of course they would take the girls back with them, which pleased everybody. But my heart got cold seeing the girls so happy, getting fooled and lied to.

Well, blamed if the king didn't get out bills for sale only two days after the funeral. But anybody could buy private beforehand. The next day some slave traders come along and the king sold them the servants cheap, for three-day notes on the bank.

Two sons was sold up the river to Memphis, and their mother down the river to Orleans. I thought their hearts would break, and the girls said they hadn't dreamed of seeing the families sold away from the town. The girls and the servants hung around each other's necks and cried like to bust. I couldn't a-stood it if I didn't know the sale wouldn't hold and the servants would be back in a week.

The people in the town thought it a shame to separate the mother and the children that way. But the king bulled right along. The next day was the sale. Early in the morning the king and the duke come to my room and woke me up. I could see trouble. The king asked me if I was in their room night before last, and I says, "No, your majesty." And the duke

asked me if I had seen anybody go in there. I studied a while and seen my chance, and says, "Well, I seen some of the servants go in there several times."

Both of them give a little jump, and the duke says, "What, *all* of them?"

"No, not all at once — that is, I don't think I ever saw all come out at one time. They went in to do up your majesty's room or something. And they was hoping to slide out without waking you up."

"Great guns, *this* is a go!" says the king, and both of them looked pretty sick and pretty silly. Then the duke broke out with a little laugh and says: "It does beat all how neat they played their hand. And they let on to be *sorry* to be going away. And I believed they *was* sorry and so did everybody. Why, the way they played that thing would fool *anybody*. If I had money and a theater, I wouldn't want any better actors. And we've sold them for a song!"

"Why, is there something wrong?" I says, kind of timidlike.

"None of your business!" snaps the king. "You shut your head and mind your own business, long as we're in this town. Don't *forget* that!"

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Then the duke says: "Quick sales and small profits. It's a good business — yes."

"I was trying to do for the best," the king growls, "selling them out quick. Is it my fault any more than yours?"

"Well, *they'd* be in this house yet and we *wouldn't* if you'd listened to my advice."

Then before they started down the ladder, the king tears into me again. He yelled at me for not telling him I saw the servants come out acting that way. Then he cussed himself, and they went out scolding at each other. I felt dreadful glad I worked it all off onto the servants, yet hadn't done them no harm by it.



## CHAPTER 26

### *Overreaching Don't Pay*

**A**t getting-up time I come down the ladder. Through the door to the girls' room I see Mary Jane setting by her old hair trunk, packing things to go to England. I seen her stop with a folded gown in her lap and put her face in her hands and cry. I felt awful bad and went in and says, "Miss Mary Jane, you can't bear to see people in trouble, and I can't. Tell me about it."

So she did. She said her trip was spoiled by knowing the mother servant and her children would never see each other again. And she cried harder.

"But they will," I says, "and inside two weeks—and I know it."

Laws, it was out before I could think, and she threw her arms around my neck and says to say it *again*, say it *again*, say it *again*! I was in a tight place and told her to let me think a minute. And she set there excited and handsome but looking kind of happy and eased up like a person that's had a tooth pulled out. I says to myself, I reckon a body that ups and tells the truth when he is in a tight place is taking a pretty big chance, though I ain't had no experience. Yet here's a case where I'm blessed if it don't look to me like the truth is better and safer than a lie. I must think it over, it's so strange and unregular. But I says at last I'm going to chance it, though it does seem like setting down on a keg of powder. Then I says, "Mary Jane, is there any place out of town where you could go and stay a day or two?"

"Yes, Mr. Lothrop's. Why?"

"I want your word that you'll go," I says. "Your word is better than another man's kiss-the-Bible." She smiled very sweet, and I shut the door and locked it. Then I set down and says, "Now, take this like a man, but I got to tell the truth. These uncles ain't no uncles at all — they're nothing but deadbeats."

It stirred her like everything, but I went right along, starting with the simple country fellow that was going to South America, and ending with the king's kissing Mary Jane sixteen or seventeen times. Her eyes kept blazing with more fire. Then up she jumped with her face red as sunset, and says, "The beast! Don't waste a second. We'll have them tarred and feathered and thrown in the river!"

Then I says, "Before you go to Mr. Lothrop's, or—?" And she says not to mind what she says, for she's all stirred up. And she laid her silky hand on mine, and said to tell her what to do.

"Well," I says, "your friends *could* take them up now. But here's me, and another person you don't know about that'd be in trouble. Miss Mary Jane, how far is it to Lothrop's?"

"Just a little short of four miles."

"Well, you go along. About half-past nine to-night, you get them to fetch you home. If you get back before eleven, put a candle in this window. Then wait till eleven, and if I don't turn up, it means I'm gone and safe. Then you spread the news and get these deadbeats behind bars."

"I'll do it!" she says.

"And if I get taken up with them, you got to stand by me."

"Stand by you!" she says, and I saw fire in her eyes. "They won't touch a hair of your head."

"I could swear they are deadbeats, but some other people can do that better than I can. Give me a pencil and piece of paper. There—'*Royal Nonesuch*,' Bricksville. Let the court send up to Bricksville and say they've got the men that played '*Royal Nonesuch*.' They'll come before you can wink, Miss Mary. And they'll come boiling mad, too. Let the sale go right along. For the way we've fixed it, it won't count for much."

"I'll start for Mr. Lothrop's now. But shall I leave my sisters with them?"

"They might wonder, if all of you went. Don't see anybody. If a neighbor was to ask how are your uncles this morning, your face would tell something. I'll tell Susan you went away for a few hours to see a friend, and you'll be back tonight. But wait, Miss Mary Jane. There's one more thing—that bag of money."

"Well, they've got it. And I feel pretty silly to know *how* they got it."

"No, they ain't got it. I stole it from them to give to you. I hid it, but I'm afraid it ain't there any more. I'm awful sorry, Miss Mary. I come near getting caught and had to shove it into the first place I come to."

"Now don't blame yourself. It wasn't your fault. Where did you hide it?"

I couldn't tell her and bring her troubles back by making her see that bag of money on her uncle's stomach. So after a minute I says: "I'd rather not tell you where I put it, Miss Mary Jane, but I'll write it on a piece of paper and you can read it along the road to Mr. Lothrop's. Do you reckon that'll do?"

She said yes, and I wrote, "I put it in the coffin. It was in there when you cried in the night. I was behind the door, and I was mighty sorry for you, Miss Mary Jane."

It made my eyes water a little to remember her crying, and them devils there shaming and robbing her. When I give her the note, I saw tears in her eyes. And she shook my hand and says, "Good-by.

If I don't ever see you again, I won't forget you. I'll think of you a many and a many a time, and I'll *pray* for you, too!" and she was gone.

Pray for me! She didn't know what a job that would be. But I bet she did it just the same — she was just that kind. There was no back-down to her. That girl was game. And when it comes to beauty, and goodness too, she beat them all. I ain't seen her since. but I reckon I've thought of her a million times. And if I'd 'a' thought it would do any good for *me* to pray for her, blamed if I wouldn't have.

Well, I reckon Mary Jane hustled out the back way, because nobody saw her go. When Susan and Joanna come down, I says: "What's the name of them people t'other side the river that you go to see sometimes?"

"There's several," they says, "but it's the Proctors mainly."

"That's the name," I says. "Miss Mary Jane she told me to tell you she's gone over there in a dreadful hurry — one of them's sick."

"I hope it ain't Hanner, sakes alive," says Susan.

"That's the very one," I says.

"My goodness, and she was well only last week. What's the matter with her?"

"Mumps, and it's a new kind, Miss Mary Jane said. They don't think she'll last long."

"How's it a new kind?"

"Because it's mixed up with other things — measles and whooping cough and brain fever, and I don't know what all."

"What in nation do they call it *mumps* for?"

"Why, because it is mumps. That's what it starts with."

"Then there ain't no sense in calling it mumps. A body might stump his toe and fall down the well and break his neck and bust his brains out. And some fool would say he died because he stumped his toe. No sense to that," says Susan.

"Well, I think it's awful," says Joanna.

"But we ought to tell Uncle Harvey so he won't be uneasy."

"That's what Miss Mary Jane wanted. She says, 'Give Uncle Harvey my love and a kiss and tell him I've run over the river to see Mr. — Mr. —' that rich family your Uncle Peter used to think so much of —"

"The Apthorps, ain't it?"

"A body can't ever remember that kind of names. She wanted them to buy the house. She is going there to speak about their buying the house. She told me."

"All right," they said. And I reckoned Tom Sawyer couldn't have done it no neater himself. Of course he would have throw ed more style into it, but I can't do that very easy, nor being brung up to it.

Well, the sale went on in the public square, and it went on and on. The king was around to chip in something from the Bible now and then, and the duke was around goo-gooing. By and by most things were sold. And I never see such a pig as the king for wanting to swallow up *everything*. Well, while they was at it the steamboat landed again and up comes a crowd yelling and laughing and singing out:

"Here's your two sets of brothers of old Peter Wilks. You pays your money and you takes your choice!"



## CHAPTER 27

### *I Light Out in the Storm*

They was fetching a very nice-looking old gentleman along and a nice-looking younger one, with his right arm in a sling. And, my souls, how the people yelled and laughed, and kept it up. But I didn't see no joke about it, and I judged it would strain the duke and king some to see any. I reckoned they'd turn pale. But they never did. The duke just went a goo-gooing around, happy and satisfied, like a jug that's spilling out buttermilk. The king just gazed down sorrowful on them newcomers like it give him a pain in his very heart to think there could be such rascals in the world. The old gentleman looked puzzled to death when he saw the king and



duke. But as soon as he spoke, I could see straight off that he pronounced like an Englishman and not like the king. He says:

“I must say I’m not very well fixed to meet this surprise. My brother broke his arm, and our baggage was put off by mistake in the town above. But I am Peter Wilks’ brother Harvey, and this is his brother William. He can’t hear nor speak. We’ll have to wait at the hotel till our baggage comes.”

“Broke his arm!” the king laughs. “Very likely, ain’t it? — and lost his baggage. Very handy.”

Almost everybody laughed, except the doctor and a sharp-looking gentleman that had got off the steamboat. It was Levi Bell, the lawyer, who come back from St. Louis. A big man with him says to the king, "Say, mister, if you are Harvey Wilks, when did you come to this town?"

"Why, the day before the funeral. On the *Susan Powell* from Cincinnati."

"Well, then, how'd you come to be at the Point in the morning — in a canoe?"

The king said he wasn't. But the man says he saw him there along with Tim Collins and a boy. Then the doctor asks if he would know the boy. And he says: "I reckon I would." He looked around and pointed at me. "Why, there he is now."

And the doctor says it's their duty to take us all to the hotel and find out *something*. And the doctor led me along by the hand, the crowd following. We all got in a big room there and lit up some candles. First, the doctor says: "I don't wish to be hard on these men. But if they are honest, they won't object to sending for that money and proving themselves."

Everybody agreed to that. So I judged that our

gang was in a tight spot. But the king looked sorrowful and he says:

"Gentlemen, I wish the money was here, but it ain't. We hid it in the straw tick of my bed. But being used to honest servants in England, we thought the money was safe. *My* servant here can tell you about it, gentlemen."

Then the doctor asked me if I saw the servants steal it. I said no, but I saw them slipping out of the room and hurrying away, being afraid maybe they had waked up my master. Then the doctor turns on me and says quicklike, "Are *you* English, too?" And when I says yes, him and the others laughed and says "Stuff!"

Well, it was the worst mixed-up thing you ever seen. They made the king tell his story, and they made the old gentleman tell his, and you could see which was spinning the truth. The king give a left-handed look out of his eye at me, and I begun to tell about Sheffield, and how we lived there, and all about the English Wilkses. But pretty soon the doctor began to laugh, and Levi Bell says:

"Set down, my boy, and don't tire yourself. I

reckon you ain't used to lying. What you want is practice."

I didn't care nothing for the flattery, but I was glad to be let off. Then the doctor started to say something to Levi Bell, and the king reached out his hand and says: "Why, is this my poor dead brother's old friend the lawyer, Levi Bell, that he wrote so often about?"

The lawyer shook hands and looked pleased. Then they got to one side and talked low, and the lawyer spoke up and says: "That'll fix it. I'll take the order and send it along with your brother's."

So they got some paper and a pen, and the king set down and worked hard writing something. The duke looked sick, but he had to write, too. Then the lawyer turned to the old gentleman and said: "You and your brother please write a line or two and sign your names."

Well, the old gentleman wrote, but nobody could read it. Then the lawyer took some letters out of his pocket and looked them over and says: "On these old letters is the writing of Harvey Wilks. Anybody can tell easy enough that this old gentleman didn't

write it. In fact, these scratches can hardly be called writing."

"If you will please let me explain," says the old gentleman, in a soft way. "My brother here copies my letters for me. It's his writing you've got here, not mine."

"Well," says the lawyer, "let him write a line or two."

"He can't write," says the old gentleman. "His right arm is broken."

Then the king laughed, but the lawyer looked at the letters again and says: "Well, well, well! I thought we were on the right track. But one thing is true"—then he wagged his head toward the king and the duke—"these two are certainly not Wilkses."

Now the king and the duke looked foolish. But what do you think? That mule-headed fool of a king said his brother William was the best joker in the world, and soon's he touched pen to paper, the king knew it was another of his jokes—he hadn't even *tried* to write. And the king kept on and on till he believed what he was saying *himself*. But pretty soon

the Englishman says, "I've thought of something." Then he turned to the king. "Perhaps this gentleman can tell me what was tattooed on Peter's breast?"

The king looked somewhat white, and it was mighty still in there. Then he sat up straight and began to smile and says:

"Gentlemen, it's a tough question, but I can tell you what's tattooed on my dear brother's breast—a small, thin, blue arrow. And if you don't look close, you can't see it. Now what do you say, hey?"

The old gentleman looked at the king and says, quietlike: "On my brother's breast was a dim *P* and a *B* and a *W*, and dashes between them." And he marked them on a piece of paper: P-B-W. Ab Turner, who had helped lay Peter Wilks out, said he didn't see any marks at all. Then everybody *was* in a state of mind. And someone says: "They're *all* dead-beats. Let's tar and feather 'em and ride 'em on a rail."

But the lawyer jumped on the table and yelled: "Gentlemen—gentlemen! Hear me just a word—just a single word, if you PLEASE! There's one way yet—dig up the coffin and look."

And they all shouted "Hurray!" and started right off. The doctor sung out to collar all four and fetch them along, and the boy, too. And some others shouted, "And if we don't find them marks, we'll hang the whole gang!"

I *was* scared now, I tell you. But they marched us right along, a mile and a half down the river to the graveyard, the whole town at our heels.

The sky was darking up. lightning was beginning to flash, and the wind was shivering in the leaves. This was the worst trouble I was ever in. Instead of having Mary Jane at my back to save me, nothing could save me now but those tattoo marks. It got darker and darker, and I was being dragged along by this big man.

When they got to the graveyard, they had too many shovels but no lantern. They began digging by lightning flashes, and sent a man to borrow a light. They dug and dug, and it got awful dark, and the thunder boomed. The lightning would show the shovelfuls of dirt sailing up out of the grave, and we could see the excited faces around. Then it would be pitch dark. They got the coffin up and the lid





unfastened, and everybody crowded around to get a sight. Then all of a sudden there was a white glare of lightning, and somebody yelled:

“As I’m alive, here’s the bag of gold on his breast!”

The big man holding me let out a whoop and rushed forward to get a look. I quick jerked back and slipped through the crowd. I fairly flew down the road, through the dark and the rain and the wind, seeing my way by the flashes of lightning. I steered right down the main street of the town. Mary Jane’s



light wasn't in the window. But just as I sailed by the Wilks' house, *flash* comes her light, and my heart swelled. She knew. And I knew, too, that never again would I see the house nor her in this whole world. She was the *best* girl I ever saw, and she was the most game.

I ran for the river, and the lightning showed me a canoe fastened with nothing but a rope. I jumped in and struck for the towhead in the middle of the river. I was breathing hard when I struck the raft,

but I sprang aboard and shouted, "Out with her, Jim, and set her loose! Glory be to goodness, we're shut of them!"

Jim was so full of joy, he started for me with both arms spread. But when I saw him by the lightning flash, my heart shot up in my mouth and I went overboard backward. Being made up like a sick A-rab, he most scared the life out of me. But Jim quick fished me out, and I says: "Cut loose and let her slide!"

So in two seconds we started down the big river, all by ourselves. I jumped and cracked my heels a few times—but about the third crack I noticed a sound that I knew mighty well, and I held my breath and listened. And sure enough! when the next flash broke, here they was! — making their skiff hum! — the king and the duke.

It was all I could do to keep from crying.

## *The Gold Saves Their Lives*

When they got on the raft, the king went for me. He grabbed me by the collar, shook me, and says: "Trying to give us the slip, was you? Pup! Tired of our company, hey?"

"No, please don't, your majesty," I says, being scared. "No, we wasn't."

"Quick, then, tell us what was your idea, or I'll shake your insides out!"

"Honest, your majesty, I'll tell you everything. The man holding me said he had a boy big as me that died last year. Then when they all made a rush for

the gold, he whispers, 'Heel it now, or they'll hang you, sure!' I couldn't help you, and I didn't want to be hung, so I run for the canoe. I told Jim I was afraid you and the duke wasn't alive, and I was sorry, but we'd have to hurry or they'd hang me, too. And me and Jim was awful glad when we saw you coming. You ask Jim."

Jim said it was so, and the king said to shut up. Then he shook me again. But the duke says, "Let go that boy, you old fathead! Would you done any different? Did you look around for him when you got loose? *I* don't remember seeing you do it."

So the king let go and the duke says: "Only one thing you've done that's had any sense to it, and that's coming up cool and cheeky with that blue-arrow mark. That *was* bright, for it's the thing that saved us from prison or being hung. That trick took us to the graveyard, and when the excited fools made a rush to see the gold, that was our only chance to get away."

Then the king set thinking and says: "And we *reckoned* the servants stole it." Then I squirmed, but the duke says: "Yes, *we* did. Not we, but *I* did."

"Look here, Bilgewater," says the king, getting mad, "don't be too personal."

"Do you take me for a fool?" says the duke, getting red. "Don't you reckon *I* know who hid that money in that coffin?"

"Yes, sir, I know you *do* know," the king answers "Maybe you was asleep and didn't know what you was up to, but you done it yourself."

"It's a lie!" says the duke, getting furious and grabbing the king.

"Take your hands off! — let go my throat!" — and the king struggled and choked and says: "I—I—I take it all back."

"Well, you just own up that you *did* hide that money," says the duke, still holding onto the king's neck. "You planned to come back and dig it up."

"Now, duke, don't get sore. But didn't you have it in mind to hook the money and hide it?"

"Well," and the duke cleared his throat, "I don't care if I did. But you not only had it in mind, you *done* it!"

"I won't say I wasn't going to do it. But you—I mean somebody—got in ahead of me."



“It’s a lie!” says the duke, sailing into the king. “You done it, and you got to say you done it!” And he squeezed tighter on the king’s neck. The king choked and tried to breathe. Finally he says: “Enough! I own up!”

Well, I was glad now, because I was cleared. So the duke took his hands off of the king and says: “If you ever deny it again, I’ll drown you. Set there and cry like a baby — you ought to, after the way you’ve acted. You old bird, want to gobble up everything you see, and let the poor servants take the blame. Makes me feel silly to think how I trusted you. I see

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now why you wanted to put in 'our 'Nonesuch' profits—you wanted to get it *all*."

"Why, duke," says the king, still sniffing, "it was you who first said to make it six thousand dollars."

"Dry up! I don't want to hear no more out of you. Now they've got *their* money back, and *ours*, too. Poor little lambs! — you old goat!"

So the king sneaked into the wigwam and took his bottle for comfort, and soon the duke did the same thing. And after a while they were thick as thieves and went off to sleep snoring. Of course when they got to sleep we had a long talk, and I told Jim everything.



## CHAPTER 29

### *You Can't Pray a Lie*

For days and days we didn't dare stop at any town, but kept going south in the warm weather. The trees now had Spanish moss hanging down like gray beards, making them look solemn and sad. So pretty soon the deadbeats reckoned they was out of danger and could stop off at towns along the river.

First they put up bills and gave a talk on the evils of drinking, but didn't take in enough to get drunk on. Then in another town they tried to start a dancing school, but they was danced out of town. Then they tried preaching, then doctoring, and telling fortunes. When they had almost no money left, they

laid around on the raft, just thinking and never saying nothing, and dreadful blue and sad. One morning they got their heads together in the wigwam and talked low, which made Jim and me uneasy. If they was planning to break into a store or something, we would leave them. And so me and Jim watched our chance.

Well, early one morning we hid the raft about two mile below a place cal ed Pikesville. The king went ashore and told us to stay hid while he went around to see if anybody had got any wind of the "Royal Nonesuch" there yet. I was glad when mid-day come and no king, and so me and the duke went to the village. . . . That afternoon we found the king in the back room of a low-down place, with loafers ragging him. He was cussing them and saying what he would do, but he was too drunk to even walk. The duke pitched into him for being an old fool, and the king begun talking back. I sneaked away and run down the river road like a deer. When I got to the raft, all out of breath, I sung out: "Set her loose, Jim. We're all right now!"

But there was no answer. I ran this way and that,

shouting in the woods, but it was no use—old Jim was gone. Then I set down and just cried. But I'd got to find Jim. So I went out on the road and come to a boy walking. I asked him if he'd seen Jim and I told him how Jim was dressed. And he says: "Yes, down at Silas Phelps' place, about two mile below. There's \$200 reward."

"Who got him?"

"An old fellow—a stranger—and he sold out his chance for forty dollars. Had to go up the river."

"Maybe something ain't straight about it."

"But it is—straight as a string. I saw the bill myself. It paints him like a picture. He's from below New Orleans."

I went back to the raft and set down in the wigwam and thought till I wore my head sore. And now I knew why the duke printed those bills. Well, I couldn't figure any way out of the trouble. After all we'd done for them rascals, they'd make a slave of Jim all his life for forty dirty dollars. If Jim had got to be a slave, he'd be a thousand times better off near his family. And so I thought I'd write Tom Sawyer, and tell him to tell Miss Watson where Jim

was. But I soon give that up for two reasons: she'd be mad at Jim for leaving her and would sell him straight down the river. And Jim would feel bad for running away.

And think of *me*! It would get all around that I Huck Finn helped a slave get his freedom. If I was ever to see anybody from that town again I'd just about die of shame. That's just the way. A person does a low-down thing and then he don't want to take the results of it. The more I studied, the wickeder I felt, stealing a poor old woman's servant. My conscience got to bothering me and showing me my mean doings, and I was scared. I tried to soften it by thinking how I was brought up wicked, so I wasn't much to blame. But something inside me kept saying:

"There was the Sunday school you could have gone to. You could have learned that people who help steal slaves, like you did Jim, go to everlasting fire."

It made me shiver, and I kneeled down to pray. But the words wouldn't come. I knowed my heart wasn't right. I was playing double. I was making

believe to give up sin, but was holding on to the biggest one of all. I was trying to make my mouth say I'd write Jim's owner and do the clean thing, but deep down I knowed it was a lie, and He knowed it. And you can't pray a lie—I found that out. Finally I says, I'll go write the letter, and then it seemed as if my troubles was all gone. So I set down and wrote:

“Miss Watson, your runaway slave Jim is down here two mile below Pikesville, and Mr. Phelps has got him and he will give him up for the reward if you send.

HUCK FINN”

Now I felt clean of sin for the first time in my life, and I knowed I could pray. But I didn't do it straight off. I set thinking how near I come being lost and going to hell. And then I got to thinking about the river trip, and Jim and the moonlight, and the storms, and the two of us floating along and singing and laughing. I tried, but I couldn't harden myself against Jim. I see him standing my watch instead of calling me, and see how glad he was when

I come back out of the fog. And he always called me honey, and did everything for me. Then I remembered the time I saved him from the men by saying we had smallpox. And he said I was the best friend old Jim ever had and the *only* one he's got now. I looked at that paper all trembly because I'd got to decide. Then I held my breath and said to myself: "All right, then, I'll go to hell" — and I tore up the letter.

It was awful thoughts and awful words, but I couldn't see any more use trying to be good. I said I'd take up wickedness again. It was in my line, for I had been brought up to it. And for a starter, I'd go and steal Jim out of slavery again — that was the worst thing I could think of.

How was I to do it? But I had to try. So when it was getting dark, I crept out with the raft to a woody island below me. The next morning I put on my store clothes and got in the canoe and cleared for shore. I landed below what I thought was Phelps' place. There was a sign, "Phelps' Sawmill," and I hid the canoe just below. I got the lay of the land and then heeled it for town. The first man I saw

there was the duke, sticking up a bill for the "Royal Nonesuch" — three-night performance. He was surprised and says:

"Hello, where'd you come from?" Then he says, kind of glad and eager, "Where's the raft? — got her in a good place?"

"Why, that's just what I was going to ask your grace," I says.

"Why ask me?" he says, not looking glad.

"Well, when I see the king in that room yesterday," I says, "I thought to myself, it'll be hours before he's sober, so I went loafing around town. And a man offered me ten cents to help him pull a skiff across the river and fetch back a sheep. The sheep got away and we had to chase him all over the country till it got dark. And when I got back, the raft was gone. But I says, 'They've got into trouble and had to leave. And they've got my Jim — my property — the only way I have to make a living.' And I cried. But what *did* become of the raft, then? — and Jim? — poor Jim?"

"Blamed if I know. That fool king made forty dollars, and then lost it by drinking whiskey and

matching half-dollars. And last night when we found the raft gone, we thought you'd stole it and left us.'

"I wouldn't leave my *slave*, would I? — my only property in this world?"

"We never thought of that. In fact, we come to reckon him as *our* property. And I've pegged along dry as a powder horn. Where's that ten cents?"

I had money on me, so I give him the ten cents and begged him to buy something to eat because it was all the money I had, and I hadn't ate since yesterday. Then he looked at me and says: "Do you reckon that Jim would give us away? That old fool king sold him and never divided with me, and the money's gone."

"*Sold* him!" I says, and begun to cry. "Why, he was *my* slave, and that was *my* money! Where is he?"

"Well, you can't get him, that's all—so dry up. Looky here, would *you* blow on us? Blamed if I'd trust you."

"I don't want to blow on nobody," I says, for the duke was looking awful ugly. "I got to find my Jim."

"We got to be here three days for the 'Royal



Nonesuch,'” he says, looking bothered, “and if you’ll promise not to blow about us, I’ll tell you where to find him. A farmer by the name of Silas Ph—,” and then he stopped telling the truth. Pretty soon he says: “The man that bought him is Abram Foster—Abram G. Foster— and he lives forty mile back here on the road to Lafayette.”

“All right. I can walk it in three days. I’ll start this afternoon.”

“You’ll start right now, and move right along. Don’t open your jaw and then you won’t get in no trouble with us, do you hear?”

That was just what I wanted—to be free to work my plans. I knew he was watching me, so I didn’t look around. I struck for the back country about a mile, then I doubled back through the woods toward Phelps’. I didn’t want to talk about these fellows, for I’d seen all I wanted of their kind. But I did want to find Jim.

## *I Have a New Name*

When I got to the Phelps' place, it was all still and Sunday-like. Bugs and flies was humming in the air, making it seem lonesome like everybody was dead and gone. And the breeze fanning along, quivered the leaves and whispered sadlike—as if dead spirits was talking about *you*. It made a body wish *he* was dead and done with it all.

Phelps' was one of these little one-horse cotton plantations—a rail fence around a two-acre yard, a stile of logs sawed to make steps over the fence or for a woman to stand on to get onto a horse. I looked around the yard and saw a log house with log kitchen joined to it and a log smokehouse back of



the kitchen. And cabins stood in a row for the slaves, and there was a big kettle to boil soap in, a bench by the kitchen door, and a bucket of water for drinking. Several hounds was sleeping in the sun. A garden and a watermelon patch was on the other side of the fence, and beyond them was cottonfields and woods.

I went right along, not fixing up any particular plan, but just trusting to Heaven to put the right words in my mouth when the time come. I'd noticed that Heaven always did put the right words in my mouth if I left it alone.

◁ I climbed over the back stile and started for the kitchen. A spinning wheel was humming along up and sinking along down again, the loneliest sound in the whole world, making me feel all alone. But I went right along, hoping the right words would

come to me. About fifteen hound dogs pounced out and formed a circle around me, with their necks and noses stretched out barking and howling. A woman come tearing out of the kitchen with a rolling pin in her hand, hitting one, then the other, and then they made friends with me. There ain't no harm in a hound dog nohow.

And behind the woman was a little girl and two little boys with just linen shirts on, peeping out from behind her gown. Then another woman come running from the house, bareheaded, with her spinning stick in her hand. And behind her comes her little children acting just like the other ones.

"It's you at last! — ain't it?" she smiled as she grabbed me and hugged me tight. "You don't look as much like your mother as I reckoned you would, for land sakes! I'm so glad to see you. Children, it's your cousin Tom! — tell him howdy. Lize, hurry and get him a hot breakfast right away — or did you get it on the boat?"

I said I did. So she took my hand and started for the house. She set me down and says: "Now I can get a good look at you. Laws-a-me, I've been hungry

for it a many and a many a time these long years. Been expecting you a couple of days and more. What kept you? — boat get aground?"

And when I said "Yes'm—" she says not to say yes'm, but just to call her Aunt Sally. And she asked me where the boat went aground. I didn't know whether the boat would be coming up the river or down. So I said the engine blowed out something. And she asked where was my baggage, and how did I get my breakfast so early? I said I hid my baggage, and the captain took me to the officers' lunch. I wanted to get the children to one side to find out who I was. But then she sent chills all up my back, saying:

"Here we're running on this way, and you ain't told me a word about Sis, nor any of them. How are they? and what are they doing? and what did they tell you to tell me?"

Now I was backed into a corner. So I knowed I had to chance the truth. I opened my mouth to begin, but she grabbed me and hurried me in behind the bed, and says: "Here he comes. Get down so's he can't see you. Don't let on you're here."

Well, there was no use to worry. From under the bed I got sight of the old gentleman. And Mrs. Phelps jumped for him and says, "Has he come?"

"No, and it makes me dreadful uneasy."

"Why, land sakes, he must have come, and you've missed him along the road. Something tells me he's come."

"Why, Sally, I couldn't miss him—you know that."

"But, oh dear, what will Sis say? You must have missed him. He—"

"I'm downright scared now," he says. "He *couldn't* come and me miss him. Something's happened to the boat, sure."

"Why, Silas, look yonder up the road! — ain't that somebody coming?"

He sprang to the window, and she reached down and give me a pull, and when he turned around, she stood beaming like a house afire. And I stood kind of shaky. He stared and asked, "Why, who's that?"

"Who do you reckon it is?"

"Why, bless you, it's Tom Sawyer!"

By jings! I almost fell through the floor! The old

man grabbed my hand and shook it, and she danced and laughed and cried. And right off they begun to ask about Sid and Mary and the rest of the tribe.

But if they was joyful, it wasn't nothing to what I was. It was like being born again, I was so glad to find out who I was. For two hours they fired questions, and I told more than ever happened to six Sawyer families. And I told how it took three days to fix the engine on the boat. And I was feeling comfortable till I heard a steamboat coughing up the river.

Then I said to myself, suppose Tom Sawyer comes down on that boat? Well, I couldn't have him give me away. I must meet him. So I told the folks I reckoned I'd go up to the town and fetch down my baggage. The old gentleman says he'd get the horse and go with me. But I said no, I'd rather drive the horse myself and not make any trouble.

## CHAPTER 31

# *The Sorry Ending of Royalty*

**H**alfway to town I see a wagon coming, and sure enough it was Tom Sawyer. I stopped and says "Hold on!" and when he see me, his mouth opened up like a trunk, and stayed so. And he swallowed two or three times like a person that's got a dry throat, and says:

"I ain't ever done you no harm. Then why does your ghost come back to bother me?"

"I ain't come back, because I ain't been gone."

"Honest injun, you ain't a ghost?"

"Honest injun, I ain't," I says.



"Well—I—I—well—I know your voice, but looky here, weren't you ever murdered *at all*?"

"No, I played it on them. Come and feel of me if you don't believe it."

He was satisfied, and so glad that he didn't know what to do. And he wanted to know about it, because it was just the kind of secret adventure that Tom Sawyer had dreamed about. But I says to tell the driver to wait, and Tom and me drove off a piece. And when I told Tom the fix I was in, he says, "Let me think." And pretty soon he says, "It's all right. Take my trunk in your wagon, and let on it's yours. Fool along slow, and after a while I'll come, and you needn't let on to know me at first."

"But wait a minute," I says. "One more thing that nobody else knows. Old Miss Watson's Jim is here, and I'm trying to steal him out of slavery."

"What! Why, Jim is—"

"I know what you'll say," I says. "You'll say that it's dirty low-down business. Well, *I'm* low-down, and I'm going to steal him, but keep mum. Will you?"

His eye lit up and he says, "I'll *help* you."

Well, I felt like I was shot—and I'm bound to

say that Tom Sawyer fell considerable in my opinion. I couldn't believe it—Tom Sawyer, a slave-stealer. I says: "If you ain't joking, remember this—you and me don't know anything about a runaway."

I took the trunk. But being so glad and so full of thinking, I got home a heap too quick for that trip. The old gentleman says: 'Why, who'd thought it was in that mare to do it? And she ain't wet a hair. I'd sold her for fifteen dollars this morning, but now I wouldn't take a hundred.'

He was the best old soul I ever see. And he wasn't only just a farmer, he was a preacher, too. Built his own one-horse log church, and never charged a thing for his preaching, and it was worth every cent of it. Plenty of preacher-farmers lived down South.

In about a half hour Tom's wagon drove up to the front stile, and Aunt Sally see him and says: "Why, I do believe it's a stranger. Jimmy, run and tell Lize to put on another plate for dinner."

Everybody made a rush for the front door, because a stranger don't come *every* year. Tom started for the house, and the wagon went spinning down the road. Bunched around the front door was Tom's



audience, just what he likes. And it wasn't no trouble to him to throw in an amount of style that was fitting. When he got in front of us he lifts his hat ever so dainty, like it was the top of a box that had butterflies asleep in it and he didn't want to upset them, and says, "Is it Mr. Archibald Nichols I have the honor of meeting?"

"No, my boy," says the old gentleman. "Nichols' place is three mile down. Come in and have dinner."

"Too late—he's out of sight," says Tom, glancing over his shoulder at the wagon. "But I *can't* make so much trouble. I'll walk."

"Dinner's all ready, and it ain't a bit of trouble," says Aunt Sally. "You *must* stay. It's a dusty three mile, and we can't let you walk. Besides, I put on another plate when I see you coming."

So Tom thanked them politely and come in. He said he was a stranger from Hicksville, Ohio, and his name was William Thompson—and he made another bow. He run on and on. At last, still talking, he reached over and kissed Aunt Sally, then settled back comfortable and was going on talking. She jumped and wiped her mouth and says: “You saucy puppy, you! What do you mean by kissing me?”

“I thought you’d like it,” Tom says. “They all said you would.”

“Why, you born fool! --and whoever told you is another crazy fool,” and her eyes snapped and her fingers worked like she wanted to scratch him.

“I’m sorry, madam, and I won’t do it again—I won’t, honest—till you ask me.”

“Till I *ask* you! Of all my born days! You’ll be the last on earth before I ask *you*.”

And Tom says, “Well, it *does* surprise me.” And he looked around slow, like he wished he could run across a friendly eye somewheres, and says to the old man: “Didn’t *you* think she’d like to have me *kiss* her?”

“Why, no. I—I—well, no, I believe I didn’t.”

Then Tom looks at me and says: "Tom, didn't you think Aunt Sally would open her arms and say, 'Sid Sawyer—' "

"My land," she says, jumping for him, "to fool a body so—" and was going to hug him. But he held her off and says: "No, not till you've asked me first."

She quick asked him and hugged and kissed him and says: "Why, dear me, I never see such a surprise. Sis never wrote me about anybody coming but Tom."

Then we all set down to dinner, and there was things enough on the table for seven families—and all hot, too. Everybody talked all the afternoon but didn't say anything about any runaway slave till after supper. Then one of the little boys asked if he could go to the show. And the old man says:

"No, I reckon there ain't going to be any, because that runaway told Burton and me about what kind of a show it was, and Burton told the people. So I reckon they'll drive those loafers out of town."

Tom and me said good night and went up to bed right after supper. Then we climbed down the lightning rod and shoved off for town. On the road I told

Tom all about our “Royal Nonesuch” rascals and as much of the raft trip as I had time to. I was going to warn the king and the duke. But when we struck the town, here comes a rust of people with torches and an awful whooping and yelling, and banging tin pans and blowing horns. They had the king and the duke riding on a rail—and all over tar and feathers looking like a couple man-size roosters. Well, it made me sick to see it, and it seemed like I couldn’t ever feel mean toward them any more. It was a dreadful thing to see. Human beings *can* be awful cruel to each other.

But we were too late to do any good. So we poked along back home, and I wasn’t feeling so bold as before. But I kept thinking, no matter whether you do right or wrong, a person’s conscience takes up more room than all the rest of his insides, and yet it ain’t no good, nohow. Tom Sawyer says the same.

## *We Cheer Up Jim*

**T**hen we got to thinking and planning. Tom says he bet Jim is in that cabin down by the soap kettle, because he saw a servant go in there with some vittles. I thought it was for a dog. But Tom said part of it was watermelon. Well, it does beat all that I never thought about a dog not eating watermelon. It shows how a body can see and not see at the same time. Tom figured it all out this way:

“The servant unlocked the lock when he went in, and he locked it again when he come out. He fetched uncle a key about the time we got up from the table — the same key, I bet. Watermelon shows man, lock shows prisoner. Jim’s the prisoner. I’m glad we found

it out detective fashion. I wouldn't give shucks for any other way. Now we'll work our minds and study out a plan to steal Jim. And we'll take the one that we like best."

What a head for just a boy to have! If I had Tom Sawyer's head I wouldn't trade it off to be a duke nor mate of a steamboat, nor clown in a circus, nor nothing I can think of. I knowed very well where the right plan was going to come from, but Tom asks me for my plan.

"Well," I says, "we can find out if it's Jim, and then bring the canoe and raft over from the island. The first dark night we'll steal the key out of the old man's trousers, and shove off down the river with Jim, hiding daytimes and running nights. Wouldn't that plan work?"

"*Work?* Why, certainly it will work. But it's too blamed simple. What's the good of a plan that ain't no more trouble than that? It's as mild as goose-milk. Why, Huck, it wouldn't make no more talk than breaking into a soap works."

Well, I was mighty sure that his plan wouldn't have anything wrong with it. And when he told it,



I see at once it was worth fifteen of mine for style, and maybe it would get us all killed besides. And I was sure, too, he would be changing it as he went along. I was dead sure Tom Sawyer was in earnest. Here was a boy respectable and well brought up, with a character to lose. And folks at home that had characters. And he was bright, and not leather-headed, and not mean but kind. And yet here he was, without any more pride than to get down to this low business of freeing a runaway. I couldn't understand it. As his true friend, I knew I ought to tell him. I *did* start to, but he shut me up with:

“Don't you reckon I know what I'm about?”

“Yes.”

“Didn't I *say* I was going to help steal Jim?”

“Yes.”

“Well, then.”

When we got home, the house was dark and still, and we went down to examine the hut. On the north side we found a square window hole, somewhat high up, with one stout board nailed across it. I says: “Here's the ticket. Just pull off the board and get Jim through the hole.”

"That's as simple as tic-tat-toe, three-in-a-row," Tom says. "I should *hope* we could find a way more mixed up than that."

"Well, then how will it do to saw him out?" I says, "the way I did before I was murdered that time?"

"That's more *like*," he says. "It's real mysterious and troublesome and good, but I bet we can find a way that's twice as long."

Between the hut and the fence was a lean-to, made out of heavy boards. Tom pulled off the lock, and we opened the door and struck a match. The floor was dirt, and there was nothing in the shed but old hoes and spades and picks. The match went out, and so did we, and we locked the door again as good as ever. Tom was joyful. He says: "Now we're all right. We'll dig him out. It'll take about a week."

I went into the house through the back door — just pulled the leather latchstring and walked in. But that wasn't exciting enough for Tom Sawyer. No other way would do him but to climb up the lightning rod. He tried three times before he made it.

The next morning we went down to pet the dogs

and make friends with the slave that fed Jim—if it *was* Jim. He was piling up a tin pan with meat and bread and things. He was good-natured and fat-faced, and his hair was tied up in little bunches with thread. He said witches bothered him dreadful these nights, and he could see all kinds of strange things and hear strange noises. His name was Nat, and he talked so much that he almost forgot what he was going to do. So Tom says: “What’s the vittles for, Nat? Going to feed a dog?”

“Yes, Master Sid, *a* dog. Does you want to go en look at him?”

I says to Tom, “Right here in daylight?” and Tom says, “Yes.”



We found it was Jim, and he knew us and spoke to us. *I* didn't know what to do. Then the servant busted right in: "Why, de goodness sakes, does he know you gentlemen?"

Tom looked in a wondering way at the servant: "Does who know us?"

"Why, dis runaway?"

"I don't reckon he does. 'What put that into your head?"

"Why, ain't he sing out right dis minute like he knowed you?"

"Well, that's mighty queer," says Tom, in a puzzled way. "*Who* sung out? *When* did he sing out? *What* did he sing out?"

Then Tom asks me if I heard anything, and I says no. Then he turns to Jim and winks at him and asks him. And Jim says no, he ain't said nothing.

"Oh, it's de dad-blamed witches, sir," said Nat, "en I wish I was dead. Please to don't tell nobody 'bout it, sir, or old Master Silas will scold me, 'cause he says dey ain't no witches. He couldn't git around dis, but it's dat way — people dat's set, stays set."

Tom give him a dime and told him to buy some

more thread to tie up his hair with and keep the witches off. And while the servant stepped outside to look at the dime, and bite it to see if it was good, Tom whispered to Jim:

“Don’t let on to know us. We’re going to set you free.”

Jim only had time to squeeze our hands. And Nat said he wanted us to come again if it was dark, for we could help keep the witches off. That suited us. And it would cheer Jim up.

## *Dark, Deep-Laid Plans*

**T**om wasn't at all satisfied with our plans. He says:

"Blame it, this thing is too easy. There's no watchman, not even a dog, to give a sleeping pill to. And all you have to do is lift the bed and slip off Jim's chains. And Uncle Silas trusts everybody and gives the key to that punkinhead, Nat. Jim could have got out that window, but of course he'd have to travel with a ten-foot chain on his leg. It's all too simple, Huck. *We* have to invent *all* the difficulties and dangers, when it was other people's duty to furnish them. What we want now is something to make a saw of, to saw off the leg of Jim's bed."

"Why, you just said that we could lift the bed and slip off the chain."

"Well, if that ain't just like you, Huck Finn. You *can* come up with the most babylike ways of going at a thing. The best authorities would saw the bed leg in two, swallow the sawdust, and rub some grease and dirt around the sawed place. Then the night you're ready to skip out, fetch the leg a kick, and down she goes. Then hitch your rope to the roof, shin down it, and fall and break your leg in the moat.<sup>1</sup> Then your trusty helpers scoop you up and put you across a saddle, and away you go. If we get time, Huck, we'll dig a moat."

"What do we want of a moat? How would that help to get Jim out?"

But Tom didn't even hear me. He set there with his chin in his hands, thinking. Pretty soon he sighed and says: "No, it wouldn't do. It really ain't necessary to saw *Jim's* leg off."

"Good land!" I says, "course it ain't necessary. What you want to saw his leg off for?"

<sup>1</sup> *moat*, a ditch around a castle that was filled with water to keep enemies from crossing.

"Well, some of the best authorities have done it. But Jim wouldn't understand the reasons for it and how it's the custom in Europe. But we can have a rope ladder—make it out of sheets and send it to him in a pie. And I've ate worse pies."

"Why, Jim ain't got any use for a rope ladder."

"He *has* got use for it. He's *got* to have a rope ladder. They all do."

"What in the nation can he *do* with it?"

"*Do* with it? He can hide it in his bed, can't he? That's what they all do, Huck. You don't seem to want to do anything that's regular. Suppose Jim *don't* do anything with the ladder? Ain't it there in his bed for a *clue*? They'll want clues, and we've got to leave them—they all leave clues."

"Well, if it's regular. But we'll get into trouble with Aunt Sally, tearing up her sheets. Now a hickory-bark ladder we could hide in a straw tick. Jim don't care what kind of a—"

"You're so simple, Huck Finn. Whoever heard of a prisoner escaping by a hickory-bark ladder? And you got a right to steal if it's for a prisoner."

"Well, I'll borrow a sheet off the clothesline."



"Borrow a shirt, too," he says. "Jim can keep a record on it."

"Why, Jim can't write."

"Suppose he can't write? — he can make marks on the shirt, if we can make a pen for him out of an old spoon."

"Why, Tom, we can pull a feather out of a goose and make a better one."

"Prisoners don't have geese running around. They always make their pens out of the hardest, troublesomest piece of brass candlestick."

"He's got to have ink, too."

"He can make it out of iron rust and tears. But the best authorities use their own blood. Jim can write his message with a fork on the bottom of a tin plate and then throw it out the window."

Well, the next morning an hour before breakfast, we went to the woods to get some rotten wood called fox-fire. The fox-fire would give a glow to a dark place. And Tom said we'd got to *let on* that a lantern might give us trouble. Then after breakfast I found an old sack to put the fox-fire in. Next I borrowed a white shirt and a sheet off the clothesline.

Tom sneaked the sack into the lean-to, and then we set down on the woodpile to talk. He says everything's ready but tools. And I says why can't we use the old picks and things in the lean-to shed. Tom looks at me with pity and says: "Huck Finn, did you *ever* hear of a prisoner having picks and shovels? What kind of show would that give him to be a hero, making it so easy?"

"What *do* we want, then, if we don't want picks and shovels?"

"A couple of case knives <sup>1</sup> from the kitchen," Tom says. "It's the *right* way, and it's the regular way. I've read all the books about it. Prisoners always dig out with a case knife — and not through dirt, but generally through solid rock. It takes them weeks and weeks and weeks, and maybe forever. How long do you think it took one of the prisoners to dig out from the bottom of Castle Deef, France? How long was *he* at it, you reckon?"

"Oh, a month and a half."

<sup>1</sup> *case knife*, a knife carried in a case. In Huck's time these knives were often used at table. Therefore, Huck probably means a table knife.

"*Thirty-seven year*. And he come out in China."

"But Jim don't know nobody in China."

"What's that got to do with it?"

"All right, Jim's too old to be dug out with a case knife. He won't *last* that long."

"I know we can't risk being as long as we ought to, because Uncle Silas might hear from New Orleans. But we ought to be a couple of years. Anyway, we'll dig in as quick as we can, and *let on* we was at it thirty-seven years."

"*Letting on* don't cost nothing," I says. "We can *let on* we was at it a hundred and fifty years. But I'll go now and find a couple of case knives."

"Find three," he says. "We want one to make a saw out of."

"Tom Sawyer, it may not be regular, nor according to the books," I says, "but there's an old saw blade sticking in the smoke house."

Tom looked kind of worried and discouraged at me, and says: "It ain't no use to try and learn you anything, Huck. Run along and get the case knives — three of them."

So I done it.

## *Trying to Help Jim*

When everybody was asleep that night we went down the lightning rod, got our pile of fox-fire, and went to work in the lean-to. Digging with our case knives was hard, and by midnight our hands were sore. And yet you couldn't see we'd done anything, hardly. At last I says: "This ain't no thirty-seven-year job — this is a thirty-eight-year job."

"It ain't no use, Huck. It ain't going to work," he sighed. "Prisoners dig a few minutes every day, year in and year out. We ought to do it that way, for another night like this and we'll have to knock off a week to let our hands get well."

"You're right, Tom. But what'll we do?"

"It ain't moral, and I wouldn't like it to get out. But we got to dig him out with picks, and *let on* it's case knives."

"*Now you're talking,*" I says. "Your head gets leveler and leveler all the time. When I start in to steal a slave, or a watermelon, or a Sunday-school book, I ain't particular how it's done just so it's done, moral or no moral. A pick is the thing, and I wouldn't give a dead rat what the authorities think about it."

"Well," says Tom, "I wouldn't stand by and see the rules broke—because right is right and wrong is wrong. A pick might answer for *you*, without any *letting on*, for you don't know any better. But not for *me*. Hand me a case knife."

He had his own, but I handed him mine. He threw it down and says: "I said a *case knife*."

I thought a minute, then give him a pickax. He took it and went to work. Tom was always particular and moral. In a half hour we was both dog-tired. When I got upstairs, I looked out the window and see Tom doing his level best to climb up the lightning rod, but his hands was too sore. At last he says: "What you reckon I better do?"

"I reckon no other way ain't regular," I called out the window. "But why not come up the stairs and *let on* it's the lightning rod?" Which he did.

Next day Tom stole six candles, a spoon, and a brass candlestick to make some pens for Jim. And I stole three tin plates. Tom said it wasn't enough. But I said nobody would see the tin plates Jim throwed out, and we could take them back to be used over again.

That night, a little after ten, we went down the lightning rod and pitched one of the candles through Jim's window. Then with the pick and shovel we dug the hole through and come out under Jim's bed. He was snoring, and when we woke him up he nearly cried. He wanted us to cut the chain off his leg and clear out right away. But Tom showed him how unregular that would be. Then Jim said that Uncle Silas and Aunt Sally come in every morning to pray for him and to see if he had enough to eat. And Tom said we'd send the things out by them. It was the biggest fool idea I ever struck. But Tom says we'll get Jim out *sure*, and went right along setting his own plans according to the books.

So he told Jim how we'd have to be sure to sneak in the rope-ladder pie and other things by Nat, the servant that fed him. And we would put small things in uncle's coat pockets, and tie things to aunt's apron strings, if we got a chance. And Jim must steal them out. And he must keep a record on the shirt, writing with his own blood. Jim didn't see much sense in most of it, but he would do just as Tom said.

Jim had plenty of corncob pipes and tobacco, and that night we set there on his bed and had a jolly good time. Tom said it was the best fun he'd ever had in his life, and the brainiest. If we could keep it up all the rest of our lives, he said, our children could get Jim out. For Jim would come to like it better and better. It would be the longest time on record for a prisoner, and would make us all celebrated.

The next morning we cut up the brass candlestick. I got Nat's attention, and Tom shoved the brass pieces and a spoon into the middle of some cornbread that was for Jim. When Jim bit into it, he most smashed his teeth. After that he always stuck his fork in three or four times before eating anything.

We were just leaving with Nat, when all at once



from under Jim's bed come a string of hounds tearing out—eleven of them. By jings, we had forgot to fasten that lean-to door! Nat yelled "Witches!" and tumbled over groaning like he was dying. Tom jerked the door open and threw out a piece of Jim's meat, and the dogs rushed out after it. Nat come to, and blinked his eyes and says:

"Master Sid, you'll say I's a fool, but I's sure I see most a million dogs or devils or something. Dey was all over me. I wish dey'd leave me alone."

"I didn't see anything," says Tom. "But I'll tell you what I think. The witches are hungry. The thing for you to do is make them a witch pie."



"But, Master Sid, how you make a witch pie? I ain't ever learn how."

"All right, I'll make one. But when we come around, you turn your back so as not to see anything we put in the pan. The witches wouldn't want you to know. And don't look when Jim unloads the pan. And above all, don't you handle the witch things."

"I'll do what you says. But I don't want to see no more witches come run from under de bed like dat. Makes me feel ghostly."

## CHAPTER 35

# *Jim Gets His Witch Pie*

**W**e found an old tin washpan to bake the pie in, and stole it full of flour from the cellar. Then at breakfast Tom put a nail in Aunt Sally's apron pocket and another under the band of Uncle Silas' hat. Our prisoner needed this to write his sorrows and his name on his prison walls. Then Tom dropped a spoon in Uncle Silas' coat pocket. Aunt Sally was hot and red and cross and couldn't hardly wait for the blessing. But she poured out the coffee with one hand, and with the other went cracking the nearest child's head with her thimble and says, "I've

hunted high and I've hunted low, and it does beat all what has become of your other shirt."

My heart fell down among my liver and Tom turned kind of blue. It was the sudden surprise of it that knocked us so kind of cold. Uncle Silas said he knew for sure he took off the shirt. And Aunt Sally says, "It was on the line yesterday. This is the third one I've made in two years, and I should think at this time of life you *would* learn to take some kind of care of them."

"I know it, Sally," says Uncle Silas, "but I don't have nothing to do with them except when they're on me. I never yet lost one of them off of me."

"Well, you would if you could, I reckon," she says. "And the shirt ain't all that's gone. Land, there's six candles gone. And a spoon gone. The rats could have got the candles, and I reckon they did. I wonder they don't walk off with the whole place, the way you're always going to stop up their holes and don't do it. You can't lay the spoons on the rats, that I *know*."

"Well, Sally, I won't let tomorrow go by without stopping up them holes."

"Oh, I wouldn't hurry. Wait 'till next year," says Aunt Sally, as she cracked down her thimble on the head of one of the children that was dipping into the sugar bowl. Just then one of the servants steps in and says, "Missus, a sheet's gone!"

"A *sheet* gone? Well, for the land's sakes!"

"I'll stop up them holes tomorrow," says Uncle Silas.

"I suppose the rats took the sheet!"

"Miss Sally," said the servant, "she was on de clothesline yisterday, but she gone now."

"I never see the beat in all my born days," says Aunt Sally. "A shirt, and a sheet, and a spoon, and —"

"Miss Sally," comes in another servant, "a brass candlestick's missing!"

Aunt Sally was just boiling mad and the rest was mighty quiet. I reckoned I would go for the woods till the weather cooled. Then Uncle Silas, looking kind of foolish, fished up that spoon out of his pocket. Aunt Sally stopped with her mouth open and her hands up. Then she says, "*Just* as I expected. You had it in your pocket all the time, and like as not the other things, too. Now, how did it get there?"

"I don't know, Sally. I was studying over my text in the Bible, and I reckon I put it there not noticing. The Bible ain't in my pocket, so I know I didn't put that in. Must have laid it down and took up the spoon."

"Oh, for the land's sake! give a body a rest. Go 'long now, all of you, and don't come back again till I've got my peace of mind."

When we was alone, Tom says to me: "Uncle Silas did us a good turn with the spoon, so we'll do him a good turn and go and stop up his rat holes."

It took us an hour to stop them all up good. Then we heard steps and here comes Uncle Silas mooning around, without seeming to think, picking at his candle and looking at the rat holes. Then he turns slow and dreamy and goes mumbling up the stairs: "Well, for the life of me I can't remember when I did it."

Then we went upstairs, for Tom had to have a spoon. So Tom waited by the spoon basket and went to counting them. I slid one up my sleeve and Tom says: "Why, Aunt Sally, there ain't but nine spoons here."



"I know better because I counted them myself," she says, counting them again. "I declare to gracious, there ain't but nine! Why, what in the world! I'll count them again."

So I slipped back the one I had, and when she got done counting she says: "Huh, dog my cats! there's ten now!" and she looked bothered. Then Tom says again he thinks there's only nine. Well, she was just trembling all over, she was that mad. So she counted and counted. Three times they come out all right, and three times all wrong.

Then she slammed the basket across the house and said to clear out and let her have some peace. So we dropped the odd spoon in her apron pocket. And

Jim got it all right, with the nail. Tom said it was worth the trouble, because now she couldn't count the spoons twice alike to save her life, and she'd likely take anybody's life that wanted her to count them any more.

And that night we put the sheet back on the line, and stole one out of her linen chest. And we kept on putting it back and stealing it till she didn't know how many sheets she had any more, and she didn't care. And she'd rather die than count them again.

With Jim's help one night we tore the sheet all up into little strings and twisted them together for the ladder. It took till daylight to make it, but we *let on* it took nine months. In the afternoon we carried it down to the woods—there was enough rope for forty pies or anything else.

That pie was a job! We got burnt and almost put our eyes out with smoke. Finally we had to cook it in Uncle Silas' warming pan, which we got from the attic. It belonged to one of his forefathers that come over from England with William the Conqueror on the *Mayflower*. We only wanted crust and the pie kept caving in. So we lined the warming pan with

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dough, loaded it with rag rope, and put on a dough roof. Then we shut the lid and held her over the fire with the long handle. And pretty soon it was done and nice-looking.

Nat didn't look when we put the witch pie in Jim's pan. And under the vittles we put three tin plates. Jim got everything all right, and he put the rope ladder inside of his straw tick. And he scratched some marks on one of the plates and throwed it out of the window hole.



## CHAPTER 36

# *“Here a Captive Heart Busted”*

**J**im said it would be tough to write on the wall. But Tom said he'd *got* to do it, for a state prisoner always left his writing and his coat of arms on the wall. Then Jim says: “Well, Master Tom, de only coat of arms I got is dis old shirt, en you knows I got to keep a journal on dat.”

“Jim’s right,” I says. “He ain’t got no coat of arms.”

“I reckon *I* knowed that,” Tom says. “But he’ll have one before he goes out of this—because he’s going out *right*.”

So while Jim and me filed away making the pens, Tom set to thinking out a coat of arms. Finally he says: "You could have a picture of a dog ready to charge, a chain for slavery, and a runaway slave with a bundle on his shoulder."

"What does it all mean, Tom?" I says.

"Well — you don't need to know, but he's just got to have it. All the nobles have a coat of arms."

And when Tom had got the coat of arms decided, he set out to plan something to write. He said it had to be sad and solemn. He worked it out on paper and read them off:

1. Here a captive heart busted.
  2. Here a poor prisoner, without any friends, worried himself to death.
  3. Here a lonely heart broke, and a worn spirit went to its rest after thirty-seven years in a lonely prison cell.
  4. Here, without home and friends, after thirty-seven years of bitter prison, a noble stranger died.
- Tom's voice trembled while he was reading them, and he most broke down. He couldn't no way make up his mind which one for Jim to write on the wall,

they was all so good. And when he said he'd let him write them all on, Jim said it would take a year with just a nail to scratch them in with. And anyway, he couldn't make letters. But Tom said he'd block them out for him. But then come to think of it, *prison* walls are stone. Then Tom remembered where there's a big grindstone down at the mill. He says we'll get it, and Jim can cut the letters on the grindstone instead of the wall.

It wasn't quite midnight, and we set out to fetch the grindstone. But it was a tough job. We couldn't keep her from falling over, and she come mighty near smashing us. When we got her halfway, and was all tired out, we see it wasn't no use. We got to go and fetch Jim. So Jim raised up his bed and slid the chain off and wrapped it round and round his neck. Then we got out through the hole, and Jim and me walked that grindstone like nothing, while Tom directed. Tom could direct better than any boy I ever see.

Jim had to dig the hole bigger to get the grindstone in. Then Tom marked some things out on it with a nail. And Jim took the nail and cut till his

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candle went out. The grindstone' we hid under his straw tick so he could sleep on it. We helped him fix his chain back on the bed leg. Then Tom thought of something: "Have you got any spiders here, Jim?"

"No, sir, thanks to goodness I ain't, Master Tom. And I don't want none. I'd just as soon have a rattlesnake."

After thinking a minute or two, Tom says: "It's a good idea. It *must* have been done before. Now, where could you get a rattlesnake?"

"De goodness gracious alive, Master Tom! Why, if dey was a rattlesnake to come in here, I'd take en bust right out through dat wall wid my head."

"Why, Jim, in a little while you could tame it."

"*Tame* it!"

"Animals wouldn't *think* of hurting a person that pets them. Any book will tell you that. Just try for two or three days and you can get him so he'll sleep with you and won't stay away from you for a minute."

"*Please*, Master Tom — don't talk so! I can't stand it! A rattlesnake wait a powerful long time before I ask him to sleep wid me."

"Jim, a prisoner's *got* to have some kind of a pet. And if a rattlesnake ain't ever been tried, why, there's more glory than any other way you could think of to save your life."

"I don't *want* no such glory! No, sir, de trouble all done if de snake bite me. If you en Huck fetches a rattlesnake in here for me to tame, I's leaving."

"Well, then, if you want to be bullheaded, we can get other snakes. We can tie buttons on their tails and *let on* they're rattlesnakes."

"Blamed if I couldn't git 'long without snakes, I tell you! I never knowed before it was so much trouble to be a prisoner."

"Well, it *always* is when it's done *right*. Got any *rats* around here? We'll get you some rats."



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"Master Tom, I don't *want* no rats. Dey bites my feet while I's trying to sleep. I'll take garden snakes if I's got to have snakes, but don't give me no rats."

"But, Jim, prisoners ain't ever without rats. They train them, and pet them, and learn them tricks. But you got to play music to them. Now — you got anything to play music on?"

"Just a mouth organ, I's got."

"A mouth organ is plenty good enough for a rat," says Tom. "Animals in a prison love music — 'specially painful music. Set on your bed and play something sad, and in about two minutes you'll have all the rats and snakes and spiders begin to feel worried about you. They'll just fairly flock over you and have a noble time."

"I don't see de point — but if — if I got to, I'll do it."

"Oh, there's one thing I forgot," says Tom, thinking hard. "Could you raise a flower here? Other prisoners have grown flowers."

"It's powerful dark in here, Master Tom."

"Plant it in the corner over there. And you want to water it with your tears."

“She’ll die on my hands, Master Tom, ’cause I don’t scarcely ever cry.”

After studying it over, Tom said Jim would have to worry along with an onion. He said he’d drop one in Jim’s coffee pot in the morning to help him make tears. Tom couldn’t understand why Jim found fault with raising a flower, and playing to the rats, and petting the snakes and spiders, and making the pens and wall-writings and journals and things. And Jim thought it was a heap of worry to be a prisoner. But Tom said Jim was just loaded down with more noble chances than a prisoner ever had before in the world to make a name for himself. Yet Tom’s thought and work was just wasted on him. And Jim said he was sorry and would try as hard as he could.

And so me and Tom went to bed.

## *Tom Writes Strange Letters*

**W**e opened the holes in the cellar, and with a wire rat-trap we got about fifteen lively rats. And we put the trap in a safe place under Aunt Sally's bed. But when we went to find spiders, little Thomas Franklin Jefferson Phelps come in and found the trap and opened the door to see if the rats would come out. They did. And when we got back, Aunt Sally was standing on the bed and the rats was doing what they could to keep off the dull times for her. She dusted us both with a strong stick and we was two hours catching more rats. And the first bunch



was the pick of the flock, too. I never see a finer lot of rats than what that first bunch was.

Next we got a splendid stock of sorted spiders and bugs and frogs. And we tried to get a hornet's nest, but we didn't. Then we got a couple dozen garden snakes and put them in a bag in our room. And after a rattling good honest day's work, we were ready for supper. Well, we didn't half tie the sack. And while we was eating, the snakes somehow worked out and crawled around.

You'd see them dripping from the beams above and maybe land in your plate or down the back of your neck. They was handsome and striped and there wasn't no harm in them. But Aunt Sally couldn't stand them no way you could fix it. And every time one dropped down on her, she would throw what she had and light out. I never see such a woman. You could hear her whoop clear to New Orleans. If she even rolled on one in her bed, she would tear out and yell like the house was on fire. For a week after that, when Aunt Sally was setting thinking about something, you could touch her on the back of the neck with a feather and she would

jump right out of her shoes. Tom said every woman was just as queer. They were made that way.

We got a licking every time one of the snakes come in Aunt Sally's way. I didn't mind the lickings so much as the trouble we had to lay in another lot. And then you never see such a lively cabin as Jim's when they'd all pile out for music and go for him. Jim didn't like the spiders. And he said that between the rats and the snakes and the grindstone there was no room in bed for him hardly. And it was always lively because *they* never all slept at one time, but took turns. When the snakes was asleep, the rats come on deck. So he always had one gang under him and another gang having a circus over him. And if he got up to find a new place, the *spiders* would take a chance at him. Jim said he wouldn't ever be a prisoner again, not even if he got money for it.

Well, by the end of three weeks everything was in pretty good shape. Every time a rat bit Jim, he would get up and write a line on the shirt. And he worked hard to cut the beautiful writings into the grindstone. We sawed the bed leg in two and covered the marks. Doing all that work in about three

weeks wore us all out, and mainly Jim. The old man had sent word to the plantation below New Orleans to come and get their runaway slave. No answer had come because there wasn't no such plantation. Now uncle was going to advertise in a St. Louis paper and it give me the cold shivers. I see we hadn't no time to lose. So Tom said it was time to write the letters.

"What letters?" I says.

"Warnings to the people that something is up. Why, when Louis Sixteen was going to light out of prison, a servant girl told about it. We'll use both a spy and a letter. It's usual for the prisoner's mother to change clothes with him, and she stays in bed while he slips out in her clothes. We'll do that, too."

"But, Tom, why do we want to warn anybody? Let them find out for themselves."

"But you can't depend on them taking any notice. They let us do *everything*. So if we don't *give* them notice, they won't do a thing to stop us. And so after all our hard work and trouble, this escape won't amount to nothing."

"That's the way I'd like it, Tom. But—do it like you want to. What about the servant girl?"

"You'll be her. In the night you steal one of the servant girls' dresses."

"Nobody is going to see what I look like, anyway."

"That ain't got nothing to do with it. We just do our *duty*, and don't worry about whether anybody sees us. Ain't you got no knightly honor?"

"All right, I ain't saying nothing. I'm the servant girl. Who's Jim's mother?"

"I am. I'll steal a gown from Aunt Sally."

"Then you'll have to stay in the cabin when Jim and me leave."

"Not much. I'll stuff Jim's clothes full of straw and leave it on the bed to look like his mother. Jim'll wear this woman's gown I got on, and we'll escape in style. And it'll be reported as a dark mystery."

So I got the servant girl's dress that night, and shoved Tom's letter under the front door. It read:

*Beware. Trouble is coming your way. Keep a sharp lookout.*

#### UNKNOWN FRIEND

Next night we stuck a skull and crossbones pictured in blood on the front door. Then the next

night we stuck the picture of a coffin on the back door. I never see a family so worked up, scared like ghosts was laying for them behind everything. If a door banged, Aunt Sally jumped and said "Ouch!" If you happened to touch her when she wasn't noticing, she jumped and said "Ouch!" She would turn around to see what was behind her and say "Ouch!" and then turn back and say it again. She was afraid to go to bed, but she didn't dare set up. Tom said he never see a thing done better and work more satisfactory.

The next morning we got another letter ready. But at supper we heard them say they were going to have a watch at both doors all night. And so Tom went down the lightning rod to spy around. The servant on watch at the back door was asleep, so Tom stuck the letter in the back of his shirt collar. It read:

*A gang of cutthroats from over in the Indian Territory is going to steal your runaway slave to-night, and they have been trying to scare you to make you stay in the house. I have got religion and want to quit the gang and lead an honest life again.*

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*Don't tell on me for helping you. They will sneak down the north side along the fence just at midnight and go to the prisoner's cabin. I am to watch and blow a tin horn if I see any danger. But I will Ba like a sheep soon as they get in. Then while they are getting his chains loose, you slip there and lock them in and kill them at your pleasure. Do just the way I am telling you. And don't tell on me. If you do, they maybe will kill me. For me, it is enough to know I have done the right thing.*

UNKNOWN FRIEND

## CHAPTER 38

# *A Mixed-Up and Splendid Rescue*

**A**fter breakfast we went over the river a-fishing and to see if the raft was all right. We got home late to supper and found them all worried and scared. They made us go right to bed, and they wouldn't tell us a word about the new letter. Half-way upstairs, when Aunt Sally's back was turned, we slid for the cellar cupboard and loaded up a good lunch and went to bed. About half-past eleven we got up. Tom put on Aunt Sally's dress that he stole, and says: "Where's the butter?"

"I laid out a lump of it on a piece of corn bread."

“Just you slide down cellar and fetch it, and then skin down the lightning rod. I’ll stuff Jim’s clothes to look like his mother, and I’ll be ready to *Ba* like a sheep soon as you get there.”

Down cellar I found the lump of butter, big as a person’s fist. I took it and started in the dark. And on the stairs, here comes Aunt Sally with a candle. I hid the butter in my hat and pulled the hat down on my head. She says: “You been down cellar?”

“Yes, Aunt Sally.”

“Well, what possessed you to go down there this time of night?”

“I don’t know, Aunt Sally.”

“You don’t *know*. Don’t answer me that way. Tom, what you been doing down there?”

“I ain’t been doing a single thing, Aunt Sally. I hope to goodness if I have.”

I reckoned now she’d let me go. But she was scared about every little thing. So she said she’d find out before she’s done with me. And she marched me right into the setting room. When I opened the door, there was a crowd of about fifteen farmers, and every one with a gun. I was most powerful sick. They



was talking in a low voice, and taking off their hats and putting them on, and being uneasy. I slipped into a chair and set down. I wasn't easy myself, for I wanted to tell Tom how we ought to stop fooling and clear out with Jim before they turned their guns on *us*.

It was now almost midnight. And the men wanted to open up on the outlaws. Aunt Sally was pecking away at me with questions, and me shaking all over and ready to sink down in my tracks, I was so scared. And the place was getting hotter and hotter. And the butter was melting and running down my neck and behind my ears.

Then one of the men says: "*I'm* for going and getting in the cabin *first* and right *now*, and catching them when they come." I nearly dropped, and some butter streaked down my forehead. Aunt Sally she



saw it and turned white as a sheet, and she says: "For the land's sake, this child's got the brain fever as sure as you're born, and they're leaking out."

Everybody runs to see, and she snatches off my hat, and out comes the corn bread and butter. Then she grabbed me and hugged me and says: "Oh, what a turn you did give me! It never rains but it pours. And when I saw that truck and knowed it was the color your brains would be if—dear, dear, why didn't you *tell* me that was what you'd been down cellar for? Now clear out to bed, and don't let me see no more of you till morning."

I was upstairs in a second, and down the lightning rod in another one. I told Tom there wasn't a minute to lose—the house was full of men with guns. His eyes just blazed, and he says: "No! —is that *so*? Ain't it *great*? I could fetch *two* hundred men if we could put it off till—"

"Hurry! hurry!" I says. "Where's Jim?"

"Right here, dressed, and everything's ready. Now we'll slip out and give the sheep signal."

But just then we heard the tramp of men coming to the door, and a man said: "I told you we'd be too

soon—the door is locked. Here, I'll let some of you into the cabin. The rest scatter around and listen."

So in they come in the dark and most stepped on us as we got under the bed and out through the hole into the lean-to. Tom poked us and we slid out, Jim first and Tom last, not breathing and not making the least noise. Me and Jim got over the fence, but Tom's trousers got caught fast on a board. It snapped and made a noise. Somebody sings out: "Who's that? Answer or I'll shoot!"

But we just heeled it for the river. There was a bang! bang! bang! And the bullets went whizzing



around us. We heard them yelling: "Here they are! they've broke for the river! Go for them, boys, and turn loose the dogs!"

We could hear their boots pounding behind us in the path to the mill. When they got pretty close, we dodged into the brush and let them go by, and then dropped in behind them. Here come the dogs making noise enough for a million. But when the dogs see that it wasn't nobody but us, they only just said howdy, and then tore right ahead toward the shouting and running. We struck up through the brush to where the canoe was tied, then hopped in and pulled for dear life. We aimed for the island where my raft was. Up and down the bank we could hear yelling and barking. Then the sounds got low and died out. We stepped onto the raft and I says: "*Now*, old Jim, you're a free man *again*, and I bet you won't ever be a slave no more."

"En a mighty good job it was too, Huck. It was planned beautiful, en it was *done* beautiful. En dey ain't nobody can git a plan dat's more mixed up en splendid den what dat one was."

Tom was the gladdest of all, because he had a

bullet in the calf of his leg. Then Jim and me didn't feel so bold as what we did before, because it was hurting Tom considerable, and bleeding. So we laid him in the wigwam, and tore up one of the duke's shirts to wrap around it. But Tom says: "I can do it myself. Don't stop, with the escape booming along so handsome. Man the sweeps and set her loose. Boys, we did it grand. If we'd had the handling of Louis Sixteen, everything would 'a' gone different. We'd whooped him over the border like nothing at all. Man the sweeps and let's shove!"

But me and Jim was talking together and thinking, and after we'd thought a minute, I says: "Say it, Jim."

So he says:

"Well, Huck, if it was Tom being set free, en one of the boys was to git shot, would he say, 'Never mind about a doctor'? Is dat like him? *Well*, den is Jim going to say it? No, sir—I don't go a step now widout a doctor. Not if it's forty year."

So I told Jim I was going for a doctor. Tom made considerable row about it, but me and Jim stuck to it. Then Tom was for crawling out and setting the

raft loose himself, but we wouldn't let him. He give us a piece of his mind, but it didn't do no good. So when he sees me getting the canoe ready, he says: "Well, if you're bound to go, I'll tell you what to do. Blindfold the doctor tight and fast. Make him swear to be silent. Put a purse full of gold in his hand, and then lead him in a circle in the dark. Then fetch him to the canoe in a roundabout way. Search him so that he won't have anything to mark this raft with and make it easy to find again. It's the way they all do it in the books."

So I said I would. And Jim was to hide in the woods when he see the doctor coming to the raft.

## *Spirits Must Have Done It*

Well, I got the doctor up — a nice, kind-looking old man. I told him me and my brother was over to Spanish Island, hunting. And when he was asleep and dreaming, he must have kicked the gun, for it shot him in the leg. And we wanted the doctor to go over there and fix it and not to let anybody know, because we wanted to come home this evening and surprise the folks.

“Who is your folks?” he questions me.

“The Phelpses, down yonder.”

“Oh,” he says, “how’d you say he got shot?”



"He had a dream," I says, "and it shot him."

"Funny dream," the doctor says.

So he lit up his lantern and got his saddlebags, and we started. But when he saw the canoe, he says she was big enough for one, but not for two. And I put in: "Oh, don't be afraid, sir. She carried the three of us easy enough."

"What three?"

"Why, me and Sid, and—and—and *the guns*, that's what I mean."

"Oh," and the doctor put his foot in the boat and rocked her and then shook his head. We couldn't find a bigger one, so he took my canoe and said for me to wait till he comes back. I told him how to find the raft, and he set out.

And then I thought to myself, suppose it takes the doctor three or four days? What are we going to do?—lay around there till he lets the cat out of the bag? We'll have to tie him and keep him till Tom's leg is well, then pay him off. I crept into a lumber pile to get some sleep, and when I woke up, the sun was over my head. I went to the doctor's house, and they said he'd gone away in the night and wasn't

back yet. Well, thinks I, that looks powerful bad for Tom. And so I was going right back to the island. Then I turned the corner and nearly ran my head into Uncle Silas' stomach. He says: "Why, Tom! where have you been all this time?"

"Nowheres," I says, "only just hunting for the runaway — me and Sid."

"Wherever did you go? Your aunt's worrying."

"We was all right," I says. "We followed the men and dogs, but they outrun us and we lost them. We thought we heard them on the water, so we got a canoe and took out after them. We couldn't find them, so we paddled along up the shore. Then we tied up the canoe and went to sleep till an hour ago. We paddled over here, and Sid's at the post office to see what he can hear. I'm branching out to get something to eat, and then we're going home."

Uncle Silas went to the post office with me, but Sid wasn't there — just as I thought. Well, the old man got a letter and then made me go home with *him*. Aunt Sally was so glad to see me she laughed and cried both, and hugged me, and give me one of them little lickings of hers. And the place was full of



farmers and farmers' wives to dinner. Such a cackling a body never heard. Old Mrs. Hotchkiss was the worst—her tongue was a-going all the time. She says:

“Well, Sister Phelps, I believe that runaway was crazy. I says to Sister Damrell—didn't I, Sister Damrell?—says I, he's crazy—them's the very words I said. You *all* heard me: he's crazy, says I. Look at the crazy things he drawed on that grindstone: 'Here such and such a person busted his heart,' and 'here so and so worried himself to death after thirty-seven years,' and that kind of chatter. He's clean crazy, says I. It's what I says in the first place, it's what I says in the middle, and it's what I says last and all the time—that slave's crazy—mad as a March rabbit.”

“And look at that ladder made out of rags, Sister Hotchkiss,” says old Mrs. Damrell.



“The very words I was saying to Sister Utterback, and she’ll tell you so herself. Sister Hotchkiss, sh-she—”

“But how in the nation did they ever *get* that grindstone *in* there, *anyhow*, and who dug that hole?”

“My very words, Brother Penrod! I was saying—pass that jug of molasses, won’t you?—I was saying to Sister Dunlap, just this minute, how *did* they get that grindstone in there? Without *help*, mind you—don’t tell me, says I—there *was* help, says I, plenty of help. Must ‘a’ been a dozen helping that slave—moreover, says I—”

“A dozen, says you!—forty couldn’t ‘a’ done everything that’s been done. Look at them case-knife saws and things, and that bed leg sawed off—a week’s work for six men. Look at that thing made out of straw in the bed. And look at—”

“You may *well* say it, Brother Hightower! As I was saying to Brother Phelps, his own self. Think of that bed leg sawed off that a way, he says. *Think* of it, says I. I lay it never sawed *itself* off, — somebody sawed it, says I — that’s my opinion, take it or leave it, it may not be of no account, but it’s *my* opinion. I says to Sister Dunlap, says I — ”

“Why, dog my cats, they must ‘a’ been a houseful of servants in there every night for four weeks, Sister Phelps. Look at that shirt — every last inch of it covered over with secret African writing done with blood — with *blood*! I’d give two dollars to have it read to me. And as for them that wrote it, I’d take and lash them till — ”

“People to help them, Brother Marples!” Aunt Sally says. “I reckon you’d think so if you’d been in this house. Why, they’ve stole everything they could lay their hands on — and us watching all the time, mind you. They stole a shirt right off the line, and a sheet, and flour, and candlesticks, and spoons, and most a thousand things that I don’t remember now. And me and Silas and my Sid and Tom was on the constant watch day *and* night, as I was a-telling

you. They slips right in under our noses and fools us, and not only fools *us*, but the sixteen men and twenty-two dogs who was right on their heels! Why, spirits couldn't 'a' done better. And I reckon they must have been spirits, because the dogs never even got on their *track* once. Explain that, any of you!"

"Well, it does beat —"

"Laws alive, I never —"

"Goodness gracious sakes, I'd been a-feared to live in such a —"

"'Fraid to live!" says Aunt Sally. "Why, I was that scared, Sister Ridgeway, I didn't dare go to bed hardly, or get up, or lay down, or *set* down. Why, they'd steal the very — well, it looks foolish now, in the daytime. But I says to myself, there are my two poor boys asleep, away upstairs in that lonesome room, and I declare to goodness I was that uneasy, I crept up there and locked them in! I did! When you get *that* scared, and it keeps running on, your wits goes crazy and you do all sorts of wild things, and you think to yourself, suppose *I* was a boy and was away up there, and the door wasn't locked."

Aunt Sally turned her head around slow, and

when her eye lit on me, I got up and took a walk. I wanted to study what to say to her to explain how we come to not be in bed. And when the people had all left, I come in and told her how the noise and the shooting woke me and "Sid" up, and the door was locked, and we wanted to see the fun. So we went down the lightning rod. But we both got hurt a little, and we would never try *that* again. And then I told her what I told Uncle Silas before. And she said she'd pardon us, for boys was all pretty wild as far as she could see. And she said she was glad to see us alive and well. So she kissed me, and jumped and said:

"Why, laws a mercy, it's most night. Where's Sid?"

There was my chance to go up town and get him. But she says one's enough to be lost at a time, and if he ain't back for supper, uncle will go. Well, he wasn't there to supper, and so right after supper uncle went. He come back about ten a little bit uneasy, for he didn't run across a sign of Tom. Both worried, but Uncle Silas said boys would be boys, and "Sid" would turn up in the morning. Aunt Sally said she'd set up and keep a light burning.

Then when I went to bed, she come up with me and fetched her candle and tucked me in bed. And she set down on the bed and talked with me a long time and said what a splendid boy Sid was. She asked me every now and then if I reckoned he could have got lost or hurt or maybe drowned and lying dead. And her tears dripped down silent. And I told her Sid was all right and would be home in the morning, sure. She kissed me and when she was going away, she looked straight in my eyes and says:

“The door ain’t going to be locked, Tom, and there’s the window and the lightning rod. But you’ll be good, *won’t* you? And you *won’t* go?”

I intended to go, laws knows. But after that I wouldn’t have went for a kingdom. She was on my mind, and so was Tom. And twice I went down the rod and slipped around front. I could see her setting there by the candle in the window with her eyes toward the road, and the tears in them. I could only swear that I’d never hurt her any more.

At dawn I woke up and went and slid down again. And there she was, her candle most out, and her old gray head resting on her hand. And she was asleep.



## CHAPTER 40

# *Why They Didn't Hang Jim*

Uncle Silas was up town again before breakfast, but couldn't find Tom. Then he and Aunt Sally both set at the table thinking, their coffee getting cold. And by and by he says: "Did I give you the letter I got yesterday morning at the post office?"

"No, you didn't give me a letter."

"Well, I must have forgot it."

So he found where he had laid it down, and fetched it to her. And she looked at it and says it's from St. Petersburg, from Sis. Just when she said that, I decided another walk would do me good. But

before she could open her letter, she dropped it and ran. For there come Tom Sawyer being carried on a stretcher, and that old doctor, and Jim in *her* calico dress, with his hands tied behind him, and a lot of people with them. I hid the letter and rushed out. Aunt Sally threw herself at Tom, crying and saying: "Oh, he's dead! he's dead! I know he's dead!"

And then Tom muttered something which showed he wasn't in his right mind. She raised up her hands and says: "He's alive, thank God, and that's enough!" And she give out orders right and left, and then went in to get the bed ready.

I followed the men to see what they'd do with Jim. Some of them wanted to hang him for an example to all the other slaves around there, so they wouldn't try to run away like Jim done and keep the whole family scared to death for days and nights. But some of them said he ain't our slave and his owner would make us pay for him, sure. So that cooled them down, because the people most anxious to hang a slave is always the ones that ain't most anxious to pay for him when they've been satisfied.

They cussed Jim, and once in a while they would

give him a cuff or two on the head. Jim didn't say a thing, and never let on to know me. And they put his own clothes back on him and chained him in the cabin by his hands and both legs, to a big ring fastened to the bottom log. And they said he would only have bread and water to eat. And if his owner didn't come, he would be sold. Well, then they filled up the hole under the bed. And they said a couple farmers with guns would stand around the cabin every night, and a bulldog would be tied to the door in the daytime. But just then the doctor come to take a look and give his advice:

“Don't be too rough on him, for he ain't a bad one. The boy was in no condition for me to go and get help, and I couldn't cut the bullet out alone. He got worse and worse and out of his head, and wouldn't let me come near him any more. He said if I marked his raft, he'd kill me, and such kind of wild foolishness. I says I got to have *help*. And right then, out crawls this slave from somewhere, and he *did* help. I never see anyone that was a better nurse or a faithfuler, and yet he was risking his freedom to help me and the boy. I judged he must be a runaway.

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"I could see that he had been worked hard lately, for he got tired and was setting with his head propped on his knees sound asleep. Just then some men in a skiff come by, and I had to get back to take care of some folks with chills. And I motioned for the men to come in quiet. They slipped up on him and tied him before he knew it. But he never gave us any trouble. We hitched the raft on and towed her over smooth and nice, and that slave never said a word from the start. He ain't bad, gentlemen—that's what I think."

Then they all softened up a little, and I was mighty thankful to the doctor for doing Jim that good turn. And they all agreed that Jim had acted very well and should have some notice took of it. So they promised and then locked him up. I was hoping they would take off one or two chains and would give him meat and greens with his bread and water. But they didn't think of it. I judged I'd better get the doctor's story to Aunt Sally, and explain how I forgot to mention about Sid being shot the night we paddled around hunting the runaway. But Aunt Sally she stuck to the sick room all day and all night.

Next morning I heard Tom was a good deal better. When Aunt Sally was taking a rest, I slipped in to see what story Tom and me would tell. But he was sleeping too. He looked pale, and not fire-faced like he was when he was brought back. Before he woke up, Aunt Sally come in and motioned me to be still. She begun to whisper that Tom looked better and peacefuller, and ten to one he'd wake up in his right mind. So we set there watching, and by and by he opens his eyes and takes a look and begins to talk: "Hello! — why, I'm *home*! Where's the raft? and Jim?"

"They're all right," I says, to quiet him.

"Good! splendid! *Now* we're all right and safe! Did you tell Aunty?"

"About what, Sid?" she broke in quick.

"Why, the whole thing." Tom's eyes just shone. "There ain't but one — the escape — how we set run-away Jim free — me and Tom."

"Good land! — What *is* the child talking about? Dear, dear — out of his head again!"

"No, I ain't out of my head. Me and Tom set out to do it, and we done it. And we done it splendid."

Well, now Tom had got started, and she just sat and stared and stared and let him talk along. And I see it wasn't no use for *me* to put in. "Why, Aunty," Tom goes on, "we worked weeks—hours and hours every night, while you all slept. And we had to steal candles, and the sheet, and the shirt, and spoons, and the grindstone, and no end of things. And we made the saws and pens and writings, and you can't think *half* the fun it was. And we had to make up the pictures of coffins and things, and the warning letters from the robbers, and dig the hole in the cabin, and make the rope ladder, and send things out to Jim in your apron pocket—"

"Sakes a-mercy!"

"—and load up the cabin with rats and snakes and so on, for company for Jim. And you kept Tom standing so long with the butter in his hat, we had to rush away. And they heard us and let drive at us, and I got it in the leg. And we dodged them and got our canoe, and made Jim a free man, and we done it all by ourselves. And *wasn't* it wonderful, Aunty?"

"Well, I never heard the likes of it in all my born days! So you been making all this trouble, and scared

us most to death? To think here I've been, night after night a—you just get well once, you young scamp, and I lay I'll tan both of you good."

But Tom was so proud and so joyful that his tongue just went it—and hers, too—both going at once. And she says: "Well, you get all the fun you can out of it *now*, for if I catch you bothering with him again—"

"Bothering with *who*?" Tom says, dropping his smile.

"With *who*? Why, the runaway, of course. Who'd you reckon?"

"Tom," and he looks sharp at me, "didn't you just tell me he was all right? Didn't he get away?"

"*Him*?" snaps Aunt Sally. "The runaway? He's in that cabin, loaded down with chains, till he's claimed or sold."

Tom rose square up in bed with his eyes flashing, and his nostrils opening and shutting, and sings out to me: "Turn him loose! *Shove*—and don't you lose a minute. He ain't no slave. He's *free*!"

"What *does* the child mean?"

"I mean every word I say, Aunt Sally, and if

somebody don't go, I'll go. I've knowed him all his life and so has Tom, here. Old Miss Watson died two months ago, and she was ashamed she was ever going to sell him down the river, and said so. And she set him free in her will."

"Then what on earth did *you* want to set him free for—seeing he was already free?"

"Well, that *is* a question, I must say. And *just* like women! Why, I wanted the *adventure* of it. And I'd have waded neck-deep in blood to—" And Tom looked at the door, surprised-like. "Goodness alive—AUNT POLLY!"

And if she wasn't standing right there, just inside





the door, smiling as sweet as an angel. Aunt Sally jumped for her, and cried over her, and I quick crawled under the bed. And when I peeped out, I saw Tom's Aunt Polly looking at him over her glasses—kind of grinding him into the earth, you know. And then she says, "Yes, you better turn your head away, Tom."

"Oh, deary me!" says Aunt Sally, "is he changed that much? Why, that ain't Tom, it's Sid. Why—*where* is Tom? He was here a minute ago."

"You mean where's Huck *Finn*—that's what you mean!" says Tom's Aunt Polly. "I reckon I raised that scamp Tom and know him when I see him. Huck Finn, come out from under that bed."

So I done it, but not feeling very bold.

Well, Aunt Sally was the most mixed-upest-looking person I ever see—except Uncle Silas. It made him kind of drunk, and he didn't know nothing at all the rest of the day. And Aunt Polly told about me, and I had to tell how Mrs. Phelps took me for Tom Sawyer—and she chipped in and says: "Oh, go on and call me *Aunt Sally*." And I says I knew Tom wouldn't mind if I *was* him, and he'd make an

*adventure* of it. And so I took his name, and he let on to be Sid and made things as soft as he could for me.

And his Aunt Polly said Tom was right, that old Miss Watson had set Jim free in her will. And sure enough, Tom Sawyer had gone and took all that trouble and bother to set a free slave free! And I couldn't ever understand before until that minute how he *could* help a body to set a slave free.

Well, Aunt Polly she said that Aunt Sally wrote that Tom and Sid had come all right and safe, and she judged she'd got to travel all the way down the river—eleven hundred miles—to see why no answer had come to her letters. And Aunt Sally says: "Why, I never heard from you."

"Well, I wonder! Why, I wrote you twice to ask what you could mean by Sid being there."

Aunt Sally says she never got the letters. And Aunt Polly turns to Tom looking serious, and says, "You, Tom!"

"Well—*what?*" he says in a low voice.

"Don't you what *me*, you bold-faced thing! Hand out them letters!"

“What letters?”

“*Them* letters. I be bound, if I have to take hold of you, I’ll—”

“They’re in the trunk, same as when I got them out of the post office. I ain’t looked into them, but I knew they’d make trouble. And I thought if you—”

“Well, you need a good licking—no mistake about it. And I wrote another one to tell you I was coming, and I suppose it—”

“No, it come yesterday. I ain’t read it yet, but I got that one.”

I wanted to offer to bet two dollars she hadn’t, but I reckoned it was just as safe not to. So I never said nothing.

## CHAPTER THE LAST

### *Nothing More to Write*

THE first time I caught Tom private, I asked him what it was he planned after setting Jim free. And he said he'd planned to run Jim down the river on the raft and have adventures clear to the mouth of the river. Then he'd tell Jim about his being free, and we'd take him up home on a steamboat in real style, and pay him money for his lost time. And we'd send word ahead and get all the slaves around to bring Jim into town with torch lights and a brass band. And then Jim would be a hero, and so would we.

Well, anyway, we had Jim out of chains in no time, and when Aunt Polly and Uncle Silas heard

how Jim had helped the doctor nurse Tom, they made a fuss over him and give him all he wanted to eat and a good time and nothing to do. And we had him up to the sick room and had a grand talk. And Tom give Jim forty dollars for being such a patient prisoner and doing it all up so good. And Jim was pleased most to death and busted out and says:

“Now, Huck, what I tell you on Jackson Island? I tells you a hairy breast is a good sign. En I says I been rich once, en going to be rich *again*. En it’s come true. Don’t talk to me—signs is *signs*.”

And Tom talked and talked along, and says let’s all three slide out and get an outfit and go for howling adventures among the Indians, over in the territory. And I says:

“All right, that suits me. But I ain’t got money to buy an outfit. And I reckon pap’s been back before now and got all my money from Judge Thatcher, and drunk it all up.”

“No, he ain’t,” Tom says. “It’s all there yet—six thousand dollars and more. And your pap ain’t ever been back, or hadn’t when I come away.”

Then Jim looked kind of solemn and says:

"En he ain't a-comin' back no more, Huck."

"Why, Jim?" I says. "What do you mean?"

"Never mind why, Huck—but he ain't comin' back no more—never!"

But I kept at him till at last he says:

"Don't you remember, Huck, de house dat was floating down de river, en a man in dar? —shot in de back? En I see him close, en ask you not to look at his face? Well, den, you can git your money when you wants it, 'cause dat man was your pappy."

Tom's most well now, and got his bullet on a watch guard for his watch. And he's always seeing what time it is. And so there ain't nothing more to write about, and I'm glad. Because if I'd 'a' knowed what a trouble it is to make a book, I wouldn't 'a' tried to write this one and ain't a-going to no more. But I reckon I got to light out for the territory ahead of the rest, because Aunt Sally she's going to make me one of her family and try to civilize me again.

And I can't stand it. I been there before.



## About This Book

A trip down the Mississippi with Huck Finn is one of the finest experiences in all literature. For *Huckleberry Finn* is an American classic written by one of our very top writers of humor and boys' adventures. The experiences of Mark Twain on Old Man River as a pilot on one of those old sidewheelers crammed his life with first-hand thrillers. He had so many stories that he just had to tell them. And what stories! Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer—both in this book—stand out in literature as the two best-known boy adventurers.

A teacher who puts Huck Finn's story into a boy's life, gives him something that he will always prize. Huck got so much out of life with so little. He enjoyed the flow of the river, the night sounds on the Mississippi, the shadows, the sunlight, the storm, the wind and the rain. And Huck liked people, and people liked him.

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